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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
NO.46 NOVEMBER 1987
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ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE 46 NOVEMBER 1987

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FEATURES

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THE 3-D STORY



THE CRASH HISTORY



FANZINE FILE



'Allo, 'allo, what's all this, then? Another issue of this 'ere CRASH magazine coming out next month? Entering innocent newsagents all over the country on November 26 . . . adding full-colour pages without due care and attention . . . I'd better 'ave a look at that. Well, move along there please, haven't you got newsagents to go to?

THE NEW SINCLAIR HAS ONE BIG DISK-



THE SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM + 3 WITH 6 FREE GAMES AND A JOYSTICK.

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The new Sinclair ZX Spectrum +3 is a real hero – because it helps you to be one.

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THE NEW MACHINE

'FOLLOWING the recent development of the Spectrum +3 computer US Gold are continuing their reputation as market leaders by fully supporting the machine with an impressive release schedule,' blah, blah, blah.

It's the usual overenthusiasm of press announcements; but it landed on my desk (literally – thanks, Richard) on the day this CRASH went to the printers (literally), and it's further evidence that the +3 is gaining more and more credibility, supported by more and more releases.

When the +3 was announced this summer, retailers and software houses alike played the game of wait-and-see: wait and see if it sells before you produce games for it, wait and see if the high £249 price comes down before you put it on the high-street shelves.

Now the price has dropped to £199 – Amstrad boss Alan Sugar admits he'd planned it all along – where it's not competing against the Atari ST and Amiga (not to mention the cost of living). And the software houses are producing games for the +3: there's even Martech's insipidly-titled *Four Top Games* compilation, which effectively offers the new *2000 AD* licence *Sláine* at £3.75, rather less than its advertised cassette price of £8.99.

There's significant support from utilities and hardware manufacturers, too; in this month's *PCW* Show report Simon N Goodwin writes of +3 compilers and assemblers, and Romantic Robot's Multiface 3 adds a new dimension to the new machine – with it you can put cassette software onto disk.

In August, CRASH wrote 'the +3 is given only an outside chance'. But is the new Spectrum coming in from the cold this winter?

HEALTHY AND WISE



There's constant grumbling from stick-in-the-mud readers about the changing CRASH staff, so presumably no gnus is good news; and to satisfy the CRASH old-timers here's a returning writer from the magazine's early days, **Bym Welthy**. Bym, another ultracool Ludlow College type, first contributed comments to CRASH ▷



in Issue Three and reappeared on the doorstep as Issue 46 began.

KEEP YOUR GLASSES

NOW you're in the new dimension, stay there – keep your CRASH 3-D glasses in a safe place (eg under the mattress, or in Franco Frey's safety deposit box). The 3-D technique was so effective we're hoping to use it in another issue soon, so keep your eyes peeled.

IF YOUR SAMPLER WON'T LOAD . . .

You are not alone. In any large run of cassette duplication there are bound to be some duds, and some of the 130,000-odd Issue 45 CRASH samplers have come back. (Most just wouldn't load; but one, returned to us at the *PCW* Show Newsfield stand, was a C0 – a cassette casing with no tape in it, just a leader!).

If your sampler will not load, for whatever reason, just send it with your name and address to:
CRASH SAMPLER REPLACEMENT SERVICE, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*

HOW YOU PLAY THE GAME

Technical reasons are wonderful scapegoats to blame things on, but we only have my memory to blame for an error in the Ocean *Game Set And Match* comp on page 50. The text says we've drawn a line through the word OCEAN in the word square as an example, and we haven't. Quite simple, really. Honesty is the best policy.

Well, probably everybody knows how to do word squares – but, for fairness's sake, you won't have to find the word OCEAN to win!

BARNABY PAGE

IN NEXT MONTH'S CRASH
THE SSSUPPLEMENT ISSSSS *2000 AD*

Don't judge a judge by his cover – in next month's CRASH you can get a real feel for Piranha's new *Judge Death* game with a special 16-page supplement featuring a Judge story from *2000 AD*. There'll also be a piece on the recent rush of *2000 AD* licences, including interviews with the programmers – and an inside look at Titan Books, the London fantasy/SF publisher which is releasing *2000 AD*'s Judge stories in book form and cosponsoring this supplement with Piranha.

TIE-INS PART ONE

From Mr Men to Masters Of The Universe: Robin Candy begins a two-part review of every tie-in and licence ever seen on the Spectrum

PLUS . . .

THE CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN – only 152 shopping pages to Christmas . . . as the games flood in, we present the CRASH guide to computing Christmas presents, including Ben Stone's Good Joystick Guide.
RUN IT AGAIN – those vehicle sims in full
SOFTWARE CLUBS – beat 'em or join 'em?
COPYCATS – miles of tape and piles of disks sit waiting to be games. CRASH sees how the duplication's done.
FANCY PACKAGING – something has to protect those tapes and disks from hail and sticky fingers. Who writes the inlays? Who designs the cover? Have they even seen the game?

PLUS: expanded Playing Tips, more news, more reviews, comps and previews in December's CRASH, on sale Thursday November 26.

REVIEWS

The CRASH guide to November's highlights

SMASHED!

HOT SHOTS 75% and over . . .

FULL INDEX

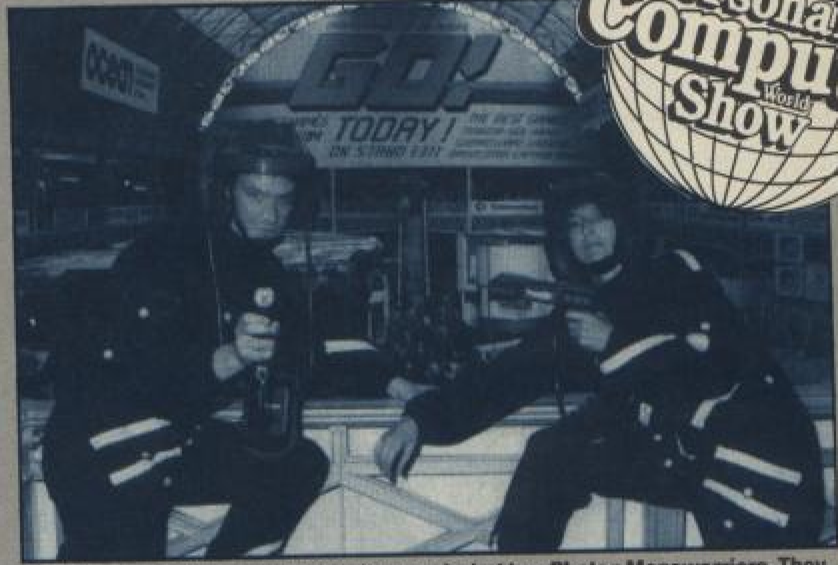
ADVERTISERS INDEX



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The 10th Personal Computer World Show

THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS



► These aren't the show's security guards, but two Photon Megawarriors. They were based at the Newsfield stand, promoting CRASH's latest sister THE GAMES MACHINE – as well as LJN Toys's Photon Warrior kit.

. . . at least, that was the software industry's verdict on the tenth *Personal Computer World* Show, which was held September 23-27 at the Olympia exhibition hall in west London.

Despite early fears of a lacklustre weekend, record-breaking attendances reassured the industry, and soon after this *PCW* Show the publishing giant EMAP abandoned plans for a rival exhibition. Preparations are already under way for next year's *PCW* Show, where it is expected games will be more heavily emphasised than ever before.

An eight-person CRASH team brings you this full report on the tenth *PCW* Show, and BEN STONE starts it off with a roundup of software launched or promised at the exhibition.

THE SOFTWARE INDUSTRY has once again done its thing. All the hard work that's been going on in darkened programming pits and PR agencies across the country has come to fruition ('well, we've got some screen shots and a video on the stand but we're expecting a preview/running demo/review/production copy on Friday at 5.30, so we'll let you see it then' – nervous laugh).

The lights have been switched off; the stands – some homely, some impressive and some imposing – have been demolished; the business people have gone back to the office to talk marketing. MDs congratulate themselves; public-relations people sit back, satisfied with a job well done; the programmers reshuffle, take a day's break (to regain feeling in their numbed fingers) and then make a start on the next game; and the freelance journalists, always the last to leave anything, leg it off to the *Foot And Mouth* with the PR minions to become newtlike without spending any money.

More than 75,000 people attended, according to management estimates – more than ever before, and 9,000 more than last year.

But while the software industry puffs on its après-*PCW* Show cigarette, I'm trying to remember everything that happened. Why remember? Well, I had my notebook nicked . . .

TELECOMSOFT SIGNS GRAFTGOLD

One of the most notable occurrences of the show was the signing of a contract between **Telecomsoft** (which owns **Rainbird** and **Firebird**) and the programming team **Graftgold**. The men behind Graftgold are Steve Turner (programmer of the Seiddab trilogy, *Avalon* and *Quazatron*) and Andrew Braybrook (programmer of *Uridium* and *Paradroid* on the C64). These two will be joined by Dominic Robinson (Spectrum *Uridium*) and John Cumming, both from Hewson.

It won't be long before we're a major force in software development.

But probably the most exciting news from Telecomsoft for Spectrum-owners is the arrival of *Dark Sceptre*, which was first previewed in 1986. Programmer Mike Singleton was walking around the show with a finished Spectrum version in his pocket, according to rumour.

Also announced at the show was the arrival of *Carrier Command* from Rainbird. This game puts you in command of an aircraft carrier, its fighters and weaponry. Realtime Software, the authors, use their filled-in-vector-graphics technique.

Among the coin-ops on the Telecomsoft stand was *Flying Shark*. Another Christmas release is Firebird's *Enlightenment* (being a CRASH reader you're already enlightened of course!), the sequel to that label's *Druid*. *Druid*, incidentally, was so popular that it's now been converted to the Japanese Nintendo system.

OCEAN

Ocean had a huge stand littered with arcade machines and TV monitors – and surprisingly few game demos. One of the few was *Combat School*: this conversion incorporates a nice control method to get around the trackball problem.

Videos on the stand constantly ran promos for *Madballs* (a toy licence), *Platoon* (a film licence), *Where Time Stood Still* (resembling *The Great Escape*) and *Flash Point* (a fast strategy game).

The Imagine side of the stand had promos for *Gryzor*, *Rastan* and *Victory Road* (all arcade licences), and *Freddy Hardest* and *Navy Moves* from Dinamic, the people who did *Army Moves*.

ACTIVISION

Activision, System Three, Electric

► 72,000 and climbing: the tenth *PCW* Show attracted bigger crowds than ever before



PHOTO: Cameron Pound

►

Dreams and Infocom had some 31 new games between them. Spectrum releases included *Bangkok Knights*, *International Karate Plus* and *The Last Ninja*: all from **System Three** and all distinctly Oriental.

Electric Dreams has several arcade licences in the pipeline: these include *Championship Sprint* (a similar idea to *The Deeper Dungeons*, the *Gauntlet* add-on, with a track designer), *Super Hang-On* (a motorbike-racing game), *Firetrap* (*Crazy Climber* with flames!) and *Karnov* (a *Ghosts 'N' Goblins* variant).

Activision itself is releasing *Rampage* and *Knightmare* (see previews – page 156), *Predator* (Arnold Schwarzenegger's new movie) and *Galactic Games* (the invertebrate Olympics?!?).

US GOLD

US Gold, always a biggie, had *OutRun*, *720°* and *Gauntlet II* arcade games on show. Its fairly imminent Spectrum releases include *Charlie Chaplin* (which gives you the chance to become a silent-movie director), *Rygar*, and those three coin-op conversions.

The American house **Epyx**, marketed in Britain by US Gold, has the Spectrum version of *California Games* skateboarding ultracoolly over the horizon.

GO!, US Gold's latest label, has four major releases due out before December: *Wizard Warz* (a role-playing game), *Captain America* and *Bravestarr* (two cartoon tie-ins) and Lazer Tag, now the best-selling toy in the US.

And GO! has the rights to three Capcom arcade machines: *Side Arms* (reviewed in CRASH Issue 39; a shoot-'em-up in the vein of *Salamander*), *Speed Rumbler* (another shoot-'em-up), and *Bionic Commando* (yet another shoot-'em-up, but with a touch of the six-million-dollar man thrown in for good measure).

CRL

CRL, now distributed in the UK by Electronic Arts (see feature pages 16-17), has *Jack The Ripper* – by a strange coincidence the Ripper murders are a century old this year. Also coming from CRL are *Oink!*, the computer game based on IPC's cult comic (and heralded by a special comic in CRASH Issue 42), *Lords Of Midnight*, *Traction*, *Plasmatron*, *I-Alien*, *Vengeance*, *Jet Boy*, *Mandroid*, *Thunder Cross*, *Lifeforce* and *Discovery*.

Endurance Games has the licence of the board game *Eye*, described by Lee Rodwell in *The Times* as 'more challenging and complex than chess'; and **Addictive** released – wait for it – *Football Manager 2*.

MICROPROSAIC

One of the most impressive stands at the show belonged to **MicroProse**. The stand itself was remarkably well-designed and pretty too, but what stood out most was the queue for the rather splendid flight simulator promoting *Gunship*. This was overseen by a berompersuited 'Wild' Bill Stealey, President of the US-based company. And as for interesting Spectrum releases, *Gunship* looks like it's the only one in the MicroProse pipeline.

PAC-MAN HANGS AROUND WITH FAIRIES

Just when you thought you'd never see his stupid face on the Spectrum again, **Quicksilva** goes and digs him out of his grave – yes, Pac-Man's back. This time he isn't going around gobbling dots; in *Pac-Land*, he's helping a lost fairy get home to fairyland!

Argus Press Software previewed *The Hunt For Red October* at The *PCW* Show. It's a submarine game based around, er, well, the sea really.

Mirrorsoft announced the coming of *Andy Capp*, a veteran of Mirror Group newspaper comics, on computer; **Martech** previewed the November release of *Nigel Mansell's Grand Prix*. Martech also has *Sláine*, based on the *2000 AD* character.

ARIOLASOFT VIRGIN

Ariolasoft's labels have them a fair number of Speccy games. *The Pink Panther* and *Tom And Jerry* are coming on the **Magic Bytes** label; both will appear on the Spectrum in early 1988. There's also *Clever And Smart*, a game about two private detectives.

The **Viz** label has *Werewolves Of London*, which will be a hairy affair, and **Reaktör** (launched in midsummer with three Spectrum titles but rather quiet since) has a beat-'em-up in store: *Bushido Warrior*.

From **Virgin Games** comes *Action Force* by Gang Of Five: this promises to be similar to the same group's *Dan Dare*. The boardgames *Scrabble De Luxe* and *Scruples* (previewed this month) are also on the way.

The **Novagen** people were whispering about *Damocles – Mercenary II* and it looks like it'll be around sometime next spring – yippee!.



PHOTO: Cameron Pound

► Not a licence more, not a licence less: Jeffrey Archer and R2-D2 on the Domark stand

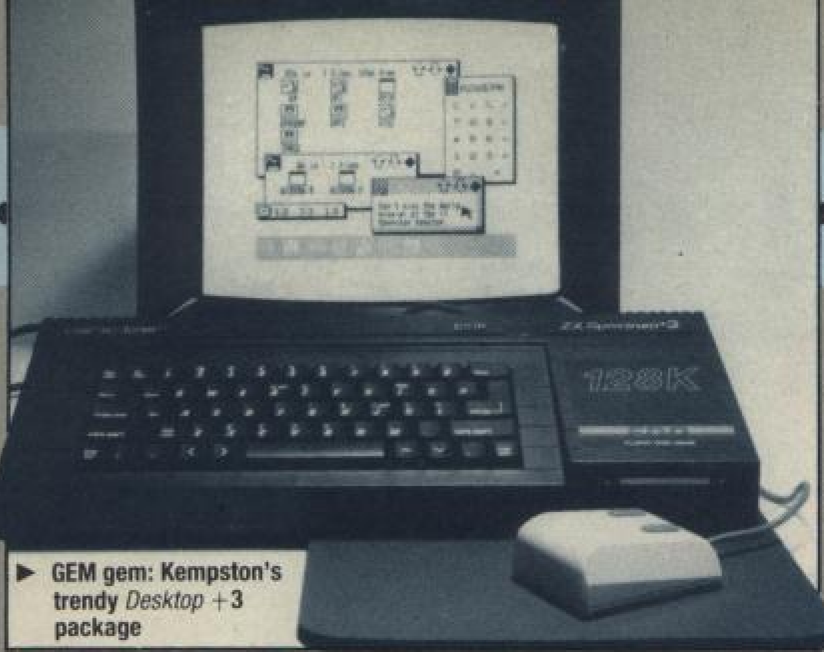
PIRANHA DOMARK

Piranha was a year old at the show, and celebrated with a cosy, almost homely stand – real, goldfish-devouring piranhas notwithstanding – featuring more new games than most software houses. There were running demos of *Yogi Bear*, *Judge Death* and *Gunboat*, all of which will be out in November. *Roy Of The Rovers* is expected early in 1988, and *Through The Trap Door* should be reviewed in the next CRASH.

Domark's stand was in a quiet and shady corner of Olympia, where Directors Do(minic Wheatley) and Mark (Strachan) lounged resplendent in blazers and straw boaters, the like of which ha never before been seen at The *PCW* show. Spiffing, really.

Jeffrey Archer – the well-known one – graced the stand with his presence on Wednesday, the first day of the show, to promote the game of his book *Not A Penny More, Not A Penny Less*. R2-D2 was there too, and what a jovial chap he turned out to be: the little &*!!!** squirted me with water. He was, of course, there to promote *Star Wars: The Computer Game*. Yes, at long last someone has licensed the coin-op.

Also launched or demonstrated on the Domark stand was a set of TV licences on the new label **TV Games**: *Krypton Factor*, a revamped version of *Blockbusters*, *Countdown*, *Bullseye* and *Treasure Hunt*. The **Streetwise** label previewed *Unitrax* (a shoot-'em-up) and *The Sewer*, a winner of CRASH's age-old Genesis: Birth Of A Game competition.



▶ **GEM gem: Kempston's trendy *Desktop* +3 package**

SPICE AND ALL THINGS NICE

Alan Sugar talks tough on the Spectrum as SIMON N GOODWIN makes a circuit of the show's hardware

CHEETAH had three new products for Spectrum-users at The *PCW* Show; the most interesting, from the gamester's point of view, was the 125 Special joystick. This looks deceptively similar to the old 125+ (which Cheetah claims is the UK's top-selling joystick), apart from the fact that it has two separate cables to connect it to the computer.

Joysticks have differed in their feel and robustness, but up till now the basic functions have stayed the same. On most joysticks you can move the stick in eight compass directions and press one or two fire buttons, but that's all. Games have had to be simplified to work with those controls, complicated to use them in combination, or kludged to use a mixture of joystick and keys that is hardly ever satisfactory.

The 125 Special changes all that. It gives you ten different controls. The extra cable from the Special must be plugged into a second joystick socket – as on the Spectrum +2 and +3 – to give the stick its extra control.

The Special has no less than FOUR fire buttons, each of which can control a different action – there could be one button for each of three weapons, say, and one to pick up or drop things. This gets around the biggest problem of playing games with a joystick: the need to reach for the keyboard whenever something unusual must be done.

You can also control things by twisting the stick, as well as by moving it in the usual way. For instance, you can send a commando running in one direction by pushing the stick, simultaneously turning the upper part of his body to fire in another direction. Likewise, you can control the turret and the base of a tank independently, and fly a simulator much more easily. In conjunction with the extra fire buttons, the twist grip makes the 125 Special far more responsive than a normal stick.

The 125 Special costs £12.99, and comes in two versions: one with scrambled connections for the Amstrad Spectrums, and one for use with twin-port interfaces such as Interface 2. Single-port interfaces, and ones that use more than one standard (such as Kempston and Cursor), are unlikely to work with the 125 Special.

The new joystick has two extra switches to control automatic repeat firing, and works as a normal stick if you only plug in one lead. It uses 'rugged long life contacts' – not microswitches – but comes with a 12-month guarantee, which is encouraging.

In the long run Cheetah will only do well with this joystick if software producers can be persuaded to write games that take advantage of its unique features. There was nothing like that at The *PCW* Show, though a compatible game from Ocean was just 'not quite ready' (haven't we heard that before?!).

Cheetah boss Howard Jacobson says he's spoken to lots of software houses about the new stick and got an enthusiastic response. Time will tell.

THAT +3 PRICE IN FULL

Amstrad boss Alan Sugar came clean to *Computer Trade Weekly* **at the show about his expectations for the new Spectrum, admitting that the** +3 had always been intended to sell at £199 – it was reduced to that price from £249 on the first day of the show, as predicted here in July. He also said, encouragingly, that the +3 is not necessarily the last Spectrum.

With his usual bluntness, Sugar revealed that the £249 launch price was just intended to fleece enthusiasts who'd pay any money for a new Spectrum, and to make it easier for dealers to sell the machine at '£50 off' this winter. Come back Uncle Clive, all is forgiven!

The +3 disk drive has attracted lots of interest from utility programmers. Trojan, the light-pen people, have picked up the rights to Myrmidon's word processor *The Last Word* and converted it to run on the +3 as well as on earlier Spectrums.

HiSoft was the first with an assembler for the +3, and has followed the £20 disk version of *DevPack* with much-improved compilers for Pascal, C and ZX BASIC on the +3. At long last HiSoft's Pascal and C compilers (£35 and £29 respectively) have been converted to handle disk files, both for programs and for data.

The new version of HiSoft BASIC, the fastest Spectrum BASIC compiler, goes one better than +3 BASIC because it supports OPEN and CLOSE for disk files. For some reason these commands weren't supported by the BASIC interpreter built into the new machine, but you can now use them in compiled programs of up to 40K, and compiled code will run on any version of the Spectrum. HiSoft BASIC costs £29.

THAT Z88 STAND FULL

Sir Clive Sinclair's Cambridge Computer stand, ironically next to the Amstrad stand in the main hall, was noticeably busier than the Amstrad/Sinclair area on the trade days. The first adventure game for the Z88 laptop was announced at the show, but there's not much prospect of shoot-'em-ups on its eight-line LCD display. (That adventure game is *Old Scores*, from a new company which hopes to call itself London Logic and also plans to develop more Z88 software. For information ring (01) 959 6239).

MICE ON THE DESK

Kempston made its name in the early days of the Spectrum, churning out cheap and cheerful joystick interfaces. Now Kempston has turned to mice – or rather mouse interfaces – that let you control programs like Rainbird's *OCP Art Studio* and The Edge's *The Artist 2* by rolling a little plastic box across the top of your desk.

At the show Kempston revealed the logical add-on to its mouse interface: a 'desktop' package for the Spectrum +3, similar in appearance to the GEM (graphics environmental manager) system for big Amstrads and Atari STs.

Kempston's *Desktop* lets you control the +3 by pointing at pictures on the screen, and includes all the usual features: file management, a calculator, digital clock, and a simple text-editor notebook, with options to cut and paste text from place to place. The +3 *Desktop* package costs £70 with the mouse, or £25 for the software alone. ▶

NEVER MIND THE BITS, FEEL THE QUALITY

Software's getting better all the time, says CHRISTINA ERSKINE (erstwhile Editor of *Popular Computing Weekly*) in this analysis of The *PCW* Show. But, she adds, Spectrum programmers must fight the 16-bit machines on their own ground.

A TENTH BIRTHDAY is something of a milestone and one expects that at the tenth *PCW* Show organisers were hoping for something special to mark that anniversary. My own impression – which has lasted since the show and through reading other press reports of it – is that they got it.

That's not in the sense that there were amazing new launches of incredible machines which took everyone by surprise, or even that, despite some palatial stands, the show looked awe-inspiring. It's simply that the overall quality of software appears to be on the up and up.

This impression is partly formed through comparison with last year's show. At the 1986 *PCW* Show, a number of the major software companies contented themselves with videos of the licence from which the game would eventually be written. Consequently, many visitors were left with no clear idea of what the finished products would look like.

This year, maybe because the companies had simply got their acts together or maybe because the show took place two weeks later, there was much more emphasis on showing the games themselves.

Obviously, when you see a demo on video of forthcoming titles, without having a chance to actually play them, you don't get a full idea of how lasting a game's appeal is or whether the screens that aren't demoed are as challenging as those that are, and nor will you know about any small bugs that may crop up – but it's a damn sight better than not seeing the game at all.

Two things struck me especially about the software on display: the nature of licensing deals has changed, and the sprites (particularly character sprites, but really graphics overall) are getting bigger and better.

LICENCES TO THRILL

Licensing deals first. Two years ago, when licensing deals were starting to make the news, some of the films (or whatever) destined for micro conversion were frankly inappropriate, and it showed in the finished games. *Back To The Future* (an Electric Dreams game), for example, may have been an enjoyable film, but is the story of time travel tied in with a plot of your future mother falling for you really easily adaptable to a computer-game format?

Now, however, the deals look much more carefully thought-out. For a start, companies are looking more closely at cartoon characters, and toys, whose nature is much more suited to computers and also to many of the people who will want to play them.

Thus we have Captain America, Lazer Tag and 720° from US Gold's new label GO! – licensed from Marvel Comics, Mattel toys and the coin-ops respectively. And, of course, US Gold itself also has *OutRun*, the Sega arcade game which everyone seems to be tipping for Number One this year.

COMPILATIONS CORNER THE MARKET

I believe that the Christmas Number One is more likely to be one of the staggering compilations we're promised. Compilations, too, appeared to have really grown up at this year's show; gone are the days when a compilation was a good way of selling off back catalogue and getting rid of dead stock. This year there are some mouthwatering goodies on offer.

Take *Solid Gold*, from that ubiquitous lot in Birmingham, for example. If you don't have *Ace Of Aces*, *Leaderboard*, *Infiltrator*, *Winter Games* and *Gauntlet* already, how could you resist that lot from US Gold at £9.95 on tape?

But the compilation to really go for this autumn must be Ocean's *Game Set And Match* (covered in CRASH Issue 45). Ocean has evidently decided that no other company should ever feel it necessary to release a sports simulation again. *Game Set And Match* has no less than ten sports over a four-cassette package (also available as four +3 disks), including *Daley Thompson's Supertest*, *Hyper Sports*, *Jonah Barrington's Squash* and others just too numerous to mention.

Add to this Elite's *6-Pak Vol. 2* (see CRASH Issue 44) and *The Elite Collection*, and Ocean's *Magnificent Seven*, and you can see why the software houses are no longer thinking of compilations as an afterthought.

SPRITES MAKE RIGHT?

Then there are those sprites. Games like Rainbird's *Dick Special* on the 16-bit machines and *Trantor – The Last Stormtrooper* from US Gold (reviewed this issue) feature large, colourful animated characters which are a far cry from the blobs and two-pixel heroes to which 8-bit-machine-owners had become resigned.

Finally, the number of companies putting their resources into Spectrum disk versions of new games is encouraging. OK, so it's not a particularly radical step to duplicate onto the Amstrad three-inch disks as well as onto cassette, but it all helps demand for the +3 itself, which in turn will keep the Spectrum alive and kicking as a current machine – and it always did need a standard disk drive anyway.

The quality of 8-bit software is improving after some months of stagnation and paradoxically this has something to do with the emergence of 16-bit micros (Amiga, Atari ST) and games consoles. For the consoles, notably the Sega games machine, there's some excellent arcade-style software, with some faithful coin-op conversions that mainstream software houses trying to produce arcade originals on the computer must find extremely frustrating.

Because it's so much easier to create good graphics on the Atari ST and Amiga than on the 8-bit machines, their games naturally look and sound better. 8-bit (Spectrum, Commodore, Amstrad) software will continue to be produced as long as the huge and steady user base remains. But if Spectrum software has tiny jerky graphics, feeble sound and weak story lines, who can blame users for upgrading – or moving sideways to a dedicated console – en masse? To keep their market, the software houses must provide quality, for now computer owners have a real choice.

So if you're planning to hang on to your Spectrum for a good while yet, you could do well on the software front. Despite the number of STs and Amigas demonstrating titles at the show, despite whiz-bang demos of Acorn's Archimedes, and despite the undeniable interest shown in the games machines, The *PCW* Show indicated to me that it's a bit early to announce the death of the 8-bit machines.

► The Sega Master System, outrunning all opponents: can Spectrum coin-ops be the same again?



CALIFORNIA GAMES

Last month CRASH brought you Trip Hawkins's balls – the Nerf Balls, little sponges which Electronic Arts bureaucrats throw at each to relieve nervous tension after going into the rough in another golf simulation.

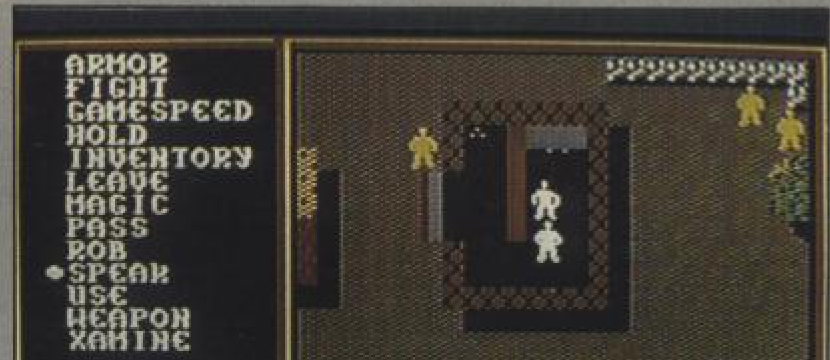
But there's more to EA than, well, little sponges. There's quality, aggression and a massive release schedule – some dozen Spectrum titles and more for 16-bit machines – behind the American giant's push into Britain, which starts this autumn.

There's also a new approach to selling (and creating) software which could make or break EA's European experiment.

And there's the wit, wisdom and statistics of boss Trip Hawkins, ever so faithfully reproduced in this exclusive interview with BARNABY PAGE.



► **Every home should have one: Electronic Arts's polished product includes** *The Chessmaster 2000* **(above; PC screenshot) and** *Legacy Of The Ancients* **(Commodore 64 screenshot)**



ELECTRONIC ARTS – the very name suggests William M 'Trip' Hawkins, 33, founder, President and pundit. His expansive talk and his expanding corporation, which officially launched its European operation at The *PCW* Show, are shot through with an American approach to games software: the programmers are 'artists' (his word), the products are elaborate and finely-tuned coffee-table C64-oriented jobs, many of them sophisticated battle/vehicle/sports simulations or adventure/role-playing games (RPGs).

Hawkins is careful not to offend his European counterparts, now rivals, too much – The *PCW* Show, where he held forth over pastrami salad and Coke, was evidence enough of a flourishing industry here – but quietly he criticises a stale atmosphere in the software world. 'My initial impression of the show is that everyone seems to have coin-op licences and imitations of someone else's coin-op licences,' he observes. 'There needs to be more innovation.

'We need to raise the standards rather than continuously having lower prices and the same rubbish.

'But if you have a programming genius trying to be managing director, you're going to have problems.'

That's why EA's 220-strong team (almost 40 of them in the European headquarters in Langley, Berkshire) works like a film studio. Level-headed producers coordinate flighty artistic programmers, providing technical help and business management. There's no in-house drudgery, no programming production line.

'They're more motivated when they're independent,' he says, 'and we should try to be a company that helps a programmer do the things he doesn't want to do.

'The kind of people that are good team players make good employees; that's very different from being an artist. An artist has to have the nerve to do something really crazy.'

GAMES GROWN-UPS PLAY

Crazy? EA's product shows little of the offbeat imagination that you can find in British games, from *Manic Miner* to *Head Over Heels*; instead it's polished, snazzy, high-tech.

Apart from the CRL and Nexus games which it's distributing (they're 'affiliated labels'), EA itself will release four Spectrum titles this winter. They are *PHM Pegasus*, simulating a 'warship of the jet age . . . so agile . . . so deadly . . . so fast'; *Arctic Fox*, featuring a 'deadly tank of the near future . . . a three-dimensional battlefield . . . accurate simulation of tank movement'; and *Bard's Tale I*, a complex computer RPG.

But Spectrum conversions are a pain in the disk drive for Hawkins's multinational, because the market is almost entirely in the UK. Is it worth EA's while converting games for this anomaly of a machine? Yes, says Hawkins, promising some 12 Spectrum releases from EA and its two affiliated labels in the next few months, not least because EA is already supporting a Japanese NEC-type machine similar to the Speccy.

'It's unfortunate,' he concedes, 'that there are so many different models. Converting a game is like changing a Mercedes into a Rolls-Royce – you have to get out a hammer and start banging around. We really need to have a standardised computer. If every TV was different and they couldn't receive the same broadcasts it'd be untenable.'

Still, 'even with ambitious projects like *Chuck Yeager's Advanced Flight Trainer* we're going to try to bring them to the cassette market. Anyone who's observant, if they see what's on Commodore cassette that's a good idea of what'll be coming on Spectrum.'

A TRIP TO THE MOON ON GOSSAMER WINGS

So POSSIBLE EA Spectrum titles include *Apollo 18: Mission To The Moon, The Chessmaster 2000* (superchess), *Skate Or Die, Lords Of Conquest* (super*Risk*), *Test Drive* and *Train Escape* ('more than just the greatest fast action arcade fun', apparently) as well as some more soothing sports sims, *Mini-Putt* and *World Tour Golf*.

It all sounds rather cool, calm, professional; not 'crazy' at all; grown-up, in fact.

Trip Hawkins has an answer. The average American games-buyer is 27, he says. (As a point of reference, the average CRASHtionnaire respondent is just over 16.)

And he says computer games have to compete with mainstream entertainment: films, TV, recorded music. The software industry has to be more than a quirky backwater.

'The subject matter of software must be more suitable for adults. I don't think adults are so interested in blasting away aliens . . .

'If you look at movies, TV, books, it's about real life. It's about real people in human situations.'

THAT'S 100,000,000

There are about 50 million home computers in the world, Hawkins wildly estimates; but there are well over 100 million video machines. 'With much better, cheaper, realistic software you could get 100 million computers,' enthuses Hawkins.

'And half the world's women – we haven't made a lot of software *they're* interested in yet.'

He's pinning down the problems. For Trip Hawkins's new age to dawn, with a mouse in every pot and a joystick in every garage, leisure software must be CHEAPER, MORE REALISTIC and EASIER TO USE and, of course, there must be a STANDARD MACHINE. (You can imagine him at the blackboard.)

His objectives are consistent. IBM PC-compatibles are the single best-selling family in the USA, and one analysis (by Wharton Information Systems) expects almost 400,000 to be sold in the UK in 1987. Hawkins expects a boom in cheap PC-compatibles; there's your standard machine.

In the USA, 16-bit machines already account for half of micro sales. And 'as computers become more powerful they will become easier to use because they're more realistic. The digital sound on an Amiga is about FM-broadcast quality.' There's your realism and user-friendliness.

But digital sound occupies so many megabytes of memory that Hawkins's superrealistic machines will have to use CD-I, the 'compact disc-interactive' technology announced in March 1986 which will allow home micros to read CD data. A CD can store far more information far more accurately than a cassette or floppy disk.

EA has been licensed by CD-I developers Philips and Sony to use the new technology; EA is building a CD-I emulator; Hawkins expects a hardware prototype in early 1988 and, with luck, a machine on the market by Christmas 1988, when it will possibly coincide with digital audio tape (DAT) supplanting CDs on the cutting edge of sound recording. We live in an age of progress.

FLOWING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

In Hawkins's ideal world, CD-I and other new technologies could be 'brought back to the mainstream computers which sell better'. And, of course, CD-I would integrate a conventional CD player with a micro; one step on the computer's way to the centre of home entertainment.

Perhaps that's the point, the integration as much as the technical development: 'You'd be buying more than just a computer,' says Hawkins. 'I don't have any problems with the word "computer", but for some people it has a negative connotation.

'There's still a lot of missionary work to be done – people who like computer games feel embarrassed about it. People think it's silly – I think *they're* silly.'

But the illusion of silliness, of computer games as just another phase of adolescence, may be fading. A report published in July in *Time*, the influential American newsmagazine, said that nearly 40% of American executives polled 'used their office computers for entertainment'. (Admittedly, the poll results came from software house Epyx.)

And there is joy at Electronic Arts over every sceptic who's converted. Trip Hawkins in visionary mode: 'Playing is the best way to learn. Every other species of mammal, that's the only way they learn, they don't go sit in classrooms and read books.

'So if you've got a flight simulator like *PHM Pegasus* you're getting a much better idea of what it's like to be in a situation like that – it's role-playing and so on, but it's dynamic and exciting.

'The simple process of interaction is good for your mind, and whatever the subject matter of a game is it makes you think about it. I get involved in reading books from playing games.'

And 'it'll be really mainstream when a computer is a social thing like TV or hi-fi. People listen to music, go to movies together. Software can be very social, it can teach you a lot about people.' Hawkins's beloved 'average household' has the TV on seven hours a day – if only games could take some of that time . . .

THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Hawkins draws fine lines between educational software – the stuff of CRASH Course – EA's self-improvement software, and empty entertainment. 'We don't go out of our way and say we're going to teach people something as a course,' he explains, 'though there are a lot of companies in the USA which do that, they call it curriculum software. *(EA itself produces software for schools and colleges.)* A lot of educators are snobs about computers and software, they're pedantic.

'Almost every new medium was introduced through a young generation – in the Fifties TV was a family purchase so kids could watch it, and then in the Sixties when rock and roll came along it was for the kids.'

He doesn't exonerate all games from the charge of silliness, though. 'Shoot-'em-ups are good for relaxation, but if that's all you did it would become a negative thing – if all you're doing is shooting things, killing things and blowing things up.'

SHOOTING THINGS, KILLING THINGS AND BLOWING THINGS UP

Hawkins founded EA in 1982 with just two million dollars (about £1.2 million at current rates); it was, publicity says, 'the 136th entrant into the home computing field' (whatever that field comprises). Its first software was shipped in May 1983. (An early investor was former Apple Computers boss Steve Wozniak; Hawkins had worked at Apple for four years. EA was – still is – based in San Mateo, near San Francisco in northern California, near Silicon Valley; Hawkins was born in San Diego on the Mexican border, in the showbiz south of the state. Thus he applies technology to entertainment.)

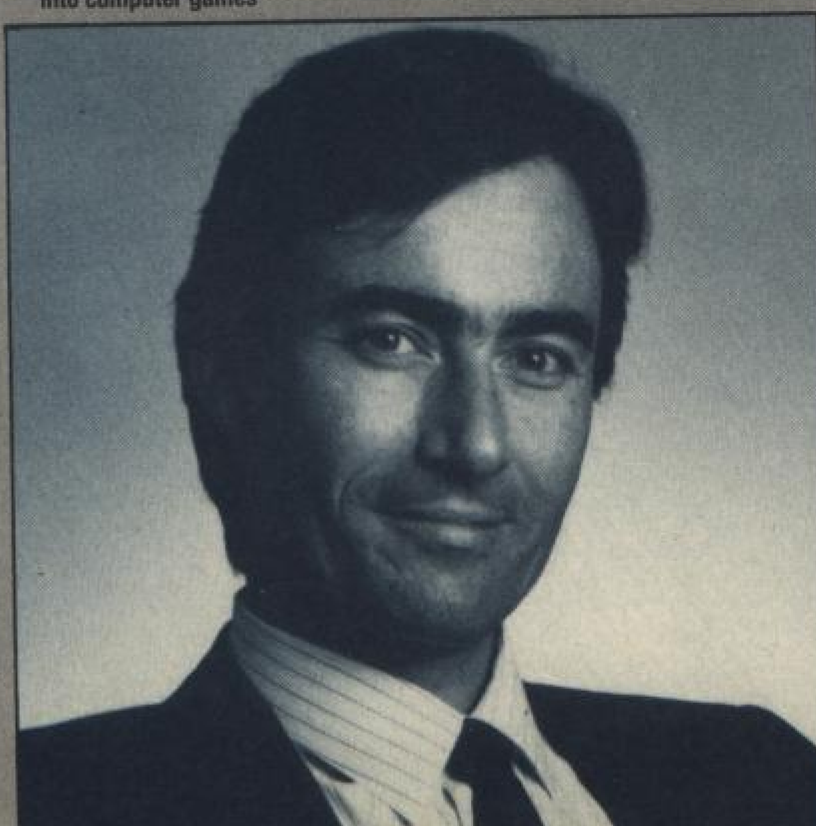
EA wasn't ready then to go multinational. For two years, 1984-1986, its product was distributed here by Ariolasoft.

But the company has grown apace. After making a pretax profit of five million dollars (£3 million) on 30 million dollars (£18.4 million) revenue in 1986, EA expects to pull in 50 million dollars' (£30.7 million) worth of sales this year.

And late last year Hawkins reckoned it was time to cross the Atlantic and see if what works there works here.

His utopia is unlikely to be realised without bitter fighting in battlefield Europe. Hawkins is directly challenging Activision (already an archrival Stateside, where EA dominates the sales charts; now a growing force here after its recent return from four years in the red and the success of *Enduro Racer* and *The Last Ninja*), Ocean, Elite and Mirrorsoft. EA is not entering the budget market, because Hawkins believes quality commands its price.

Show business indeed: Electronic Arts boss Trip Hawkins puts the Hollywood into computer games



OFF CENTRESOFT

One vital outlet, Boots, has already been lost. Since the controversial collapse of Creative Sparks Distribution (CSD) in July, Boots has been supplied entirely by Centresoft – and Hawkins doesn't want EA/CRL/Nexus product going through Centresoft. He has two reasons.

First, Centresoft would ship games manufactured for the UK to continental Europe – but Hawkins wants to handle each country separately, with different prices and translated packaging. (He has already signed deals with distributors in seven other European countries, though the quite important Italian market hasn't been touched despite its American-style Commodore 64 emphasis.)

'It's not that we don't like Centresoft,' he explains, 'we want English-language product in the country where it belongs.'

Second, Hawkins wants EA to deal directly with retailers, an unprecedented move cutting out the distributors entirely. (The only distributor handling EA product is Terry Blood Distribution, which will put its games on the shelves in John Menzies and WH Smith.)

Indeed, that's one of the reasons EA signed up its affiliated labels CRL and Nexus; they can 'concentrate on product and make more product and better product' without worrying about distribution, and EA will have enough different titles to impress the retailers.

'Now the interest in signing on other labels has diminished,' says Hawkins. 'What we really wanted was a critical mass so we could go to retailers with an attractive range.'

Why?

'We don't do this direct sale thing because it's the be all and end all, we do it because it has to be done.'

Why?

Well, by talking to the retailers themselves, EA can cultivate loyalty to its labels, ensuring better point-of-sale marketing (ie advertising in the shop itself) and more orders.

ANOTHER PHILOSOPHY

And you guessed it – there's also a philosophy. Hawkins wants to see bigger, better software shops like bookshops, divorced from the quite different hardware market. 'In the early days of hi-fi records and record players sold together, now they're separate and it'd be ridiculous to buy them in the same place. I'd like to see more stores really committed to software and stocking a broad range.'

It's an integrated view: of how games software is programmed, debugged, fine-tuned, packaged, distributed, advertised, sold, played, regarded. If EA succeeds in the UK, it will change the way we think about games (this high-tech hyperbole is getting to me). As the the EA poster says, *Unleash the power of your imagination* . . .

N·E·W·S I·N·P·U·T·

To round off this *PCW* Show report, here are two very different perspectives on the five days at Olympia: from former CRASH Editor ROGER KEAN, and from reader ANTHONY BAILEY, a homegrown-software programmer who hit the big time there . . .

AND THE SHOW SAILS ON

I FIRST visited The *Personal Computer World* Show in 1983, just as we were setting up CRASH. It was held at the Barbican Centre near the City Of London – a rather nicer venue than ancient Olympia, but not big enough for the burgeoning show, which had already been going for five years. The reason for growth was obvious enough: the sixth *PCW* Show had a healthy helping of games software houses exhibiting for the first time.

Wandering around, one couldn't help overhearing the displeasure of the business-computing community as seriously-besuited pinstripes grumbled about the noise emanating from the entertainment exhibitors so unwisely scattered willy-nilly among their sober stands.

The move to Olympia in 1984 gave the organisers far more room, and the layout of the National Hall and Olympia 2 meant the noisy exuberance of the 'leisure side', as it was becoming known, could be contained in just one side of the vast hall. Since then, with each year, 'PCW' (as it's called) has got larger, the number of visitors greater and the enthusiasm of the trade higher. This year the tenth PCW enjoyed a 38% increase in the number of exhibitors and had the busiest Saturday and Sunday in its history.

As with any undertaking of this complexity, there are always moans. Olympia isn't the easiest exhibition hall to erect stands in, with its several floors, lack of lifts and appalling facilities.

Also, this year I quickly detected the dissatisfaction of games software houses who felt the organisers were not exposing the leisure industry to the noncomputer press as effectively as they were publicising the business side. And it was this disaffection that East Midland Allied Press (EMAP), publisher of *Computer & Video Games*, *Commodore User* and *Sinclair User*, tapped into when it announced that next year its exhibition arm would organise a games-only show in competition with PCW.

It caused what was probably the biggest buzz of the show, and forced everyone taking part to think deeply about PCW and what it represents. But uncertainty about EMAP's mid-August date and the venue, the Alexandra Palace, eventually weighed against the newspaper and magazine giant – soon after PCW, EMAP abandoned its plans.

And many of the bigger software houses had little faith that the enormous international goodwill built up over years of PCWs would be switched to another organiser, at another venue and in the height of the holiday season. For those attending PCW, the two trade days are the most vital. That's when the international business deals are done that enable British producers to spread their influence and sales, and thus allow them to continue developing expensive games which can be sold here in Britain at reasonable prices.

But while all this behind-the-scenes activity raged, the National Hall thronged with visitors, and judging by the reactions from those who caused traffic jams round the two Newsfield stands up on the first floor, the public's regard for the show is as high as it ever was.

Perhaps there weren't many startlingly new games to see, but there was a lot of high-quality product about. 'Wild Bill' Stealey, American ace fighter pilot and MicroProse boss, drew huge crowds round his company's stand, as he offered *Gunship* flights in a real simulator machine – an indication perhaps, that next year's show would do well to offer more interactive fairground-type events.

For us at Newsfield, the sticker war that threatened on Saturday flared into open battle on Sunday as *Your Sinclair* attempted to cover everyone in sight, and CRASH personnel valiantly fought back by oversticking the slogans with FRAGILE and SOLD stickers. Thanks go to our deep-cover agents who went boldly to the very jaws of the *Your Sinclair* stand to neutralise bestickered visitors at the point of infection.

We've offered *Your Sinclair* an official intermagazine custard-pie fight next year. See you then . . .

ROGER KEAN

BRIGHTER THAN A SUPERNOVA

EARLY one chilly Saturday morn, when the sun had scarcely risen and the world was still in sleepy slumber (all right, it was eight o'clock, but I consider that pretty early for a Saturday) a trio of hardened, battle-weary Spectrum-owners, consisting of Andrew, David and myself, left the quiet suburbs of the city on a journey to its centre and to that den of iniquity, the infamous *PCW* Show.

Upon arriving at Earls Court tube station en route to Olympia, my suspicions that the show was going to be popular were confirmed; the platform was jam-packed, and when the train arrived everyone crammed into it in something akin to one of those silly record-breaking attempts that Noel Edmonds used to organise. It was a little uncomfortable, but constituted a great way to meet new people; 'excuse me but your elbow is in my ear' was an obvious method of introduction.

We all managed to creak and groan our way to Olympia, and once there most people began a frantic race to get a place in the queue. However, remembering having to stand in line for an hour last year, with only paper aeroplanes made from leaflets to amuse us, we had wisely bought tickets in advance and were able to walk straight in. Well, that is to say we would have walked straight in if the ticket-holders' entrance hadn't been obscured by the main queue that encircled the huge building; but at last we located it and, after taking a deep breath, we ventured in.

The first thing that happened was that we were viciously attacked and mugged by two *PCW* Show representatives who relieved Andrew of two pounds in return for a thoroughly useless show guide.

The 1986 show had been amazingly BIG. This year's was stupefyingly BIG. Almost everything had grown in size: the crowds, the stands, the monitor screens, the prices of the hot dogs . . . The adverts were huge too, but the one hanging from the ceiling for US Gold's tritely-named new GO! label was so large it blended into the background – afterwards neither David nor Andrew could actually recall having read it!

The posters had swelled too, from little A3/A4 things to enormous monsters hitherto seen only in CRASH Christmas Specials. Unfortunately the free plastic bags hadn't grown to compensate, so most of the posters got rather crumpled and torn during the course of the hectic day.

David came up with the ingenious idea of tying several of the widely available helium-filled balloons to his plastic bags in order to lighten the load. However, the first hour of the show always degenerates into a deranged paper chase as everyone struggles to collect every available freebie poster and catalogue; I collected five tons of trivia and threw away everything except for my CRASH carrier bag and one price list when I returned home.

The upshot of all this was that the balloons proved incapable of carrying such a load, and so we decided to tie them all together and ended up with ten balloons on a string as many metres long, which I then carted around for the rest of the day, weaving it in and out of signposts and the like. This was of course very silly (though not quite as silly as the people breathing helium from the balloons and then talking in squeaky voices) *(such as Richard Eddy on the CRASH stand - Man Ed)*, but the balloons made a good mascot and everyone looked up in the air as they walked past.

The sight of ten colourful balloons proved to be a useful reference point when we got split up later in the day (especially when we were almost crushed to death in a crowd from which real screams were emanating – I kid you not).

Balloons in tow, we pushed and shoved our way around the hall. I don't intend to describe everything there, but there were a couple of things that caught my eye: the enormous Ocean and Imagine stands were filled to overflowing with arcade machines, promotional videos, and demos . . . not many games on home computers, though. I suppose Ocean knows that the arcade conversions are rather lacking when compared to their originals, and would prefer not to disappoint the ever-hopeful home-computer-owner.

Beyond said *Star Trek* was almost ready, which was great news, except they'd said that the year before . . . the Mastertronic stand was so full of other companies' products that I only worked out it was really the Mastertronic stand when I looked in the show guide . . . there were Z88s, Amstrads, and Atari STs running a lot of impressive graphics but not many games.

There was also even a bookshop; this was of special interest to us as we were looking for an obscure textbook supposedly only available in Manchester. It wasn't available, however, and Andrew had to go on an illegal undercover raid into the 'restricted' business section of the show, wearing a false ID card and pretending to be called Martin. The book wasn't there, either, but there were plenty of besuited gentlemen and *WORDSTAR* clones (*WORDSTAR* being the only program that has been copied more times than *Knight Lore!*).

Back in the main hall, there was plenty of gratuitous sex and violence to keep everyone happy; there was *Strip Poker II* from Martech, and adjacent to that the Palace stand was adorned with larger-than-life posters of Maria Whittaker.

On the violent side, some deranged Rambo lookalike was striding around waving grenades. Other characters in costume included a Yogi Bear pushing Piranha's licence (smarter than the average bear but not smart enough to get out of wearing a sweaty bear suit all day), and the villain from Gremlin Graphics's *Basil The Great Mouse Detective*, who went around pickpocketing all and sundry and making people laugh.

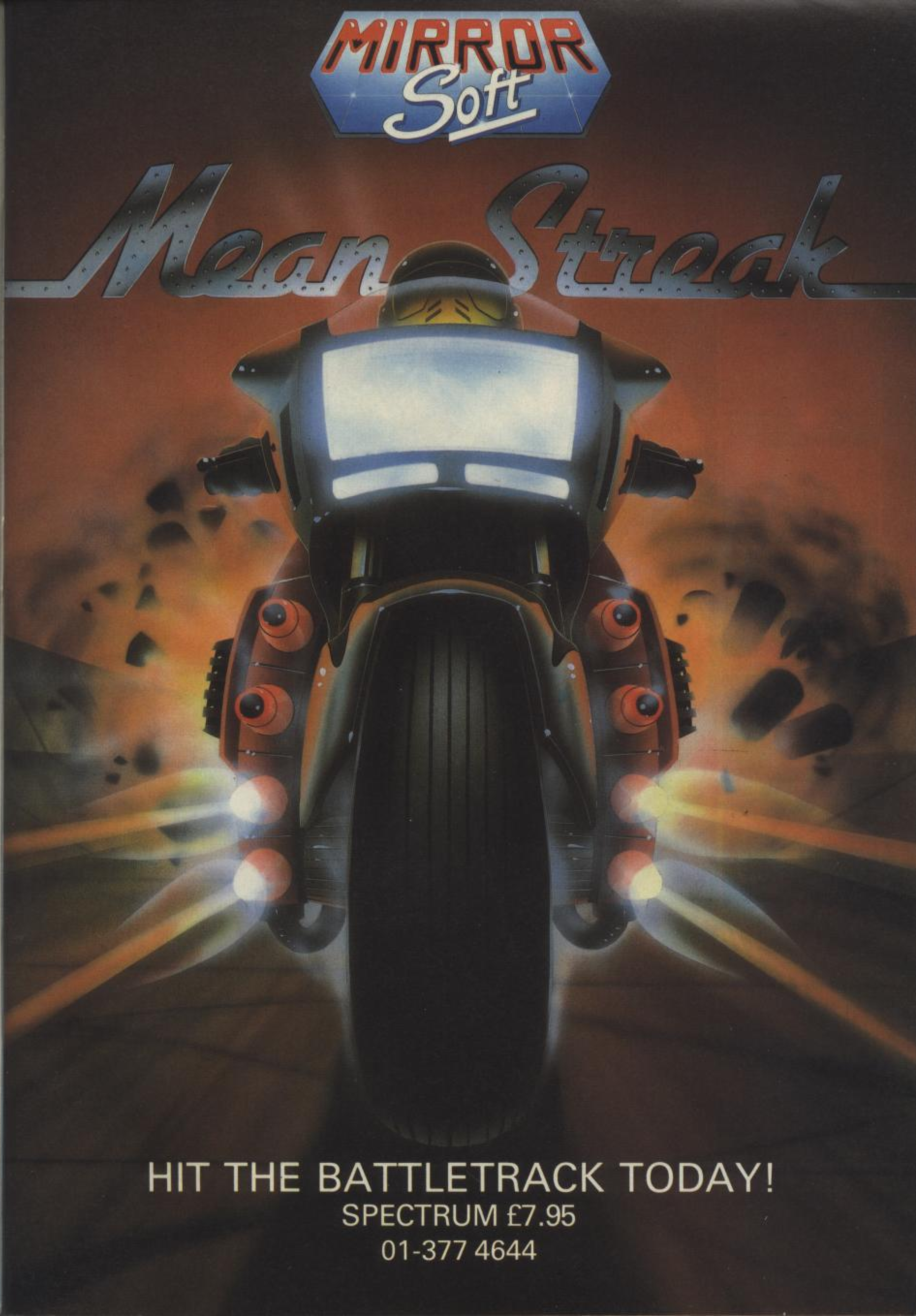
But despite Piranha's promises, I failed to see Berk from *Trapdoor*, and had to make do with the cartoons they played continuously. On a more positive note, there was some really promising stuff on show: Martech's *2000 AD* licence *Sláine* should be great, Incentive was promoting *Driller* with lots of carefully-chosen freedom-oriented records to go with the concept of Freescape *(see the CRASH 3-D feature which starts on page 53 - Cross-Referencing Minion)*, there was ***SUPERNOVA*** on the **PLAYERS** stand (c'mon, a little plug for my own game won't hurt, will it?) *(nor will the review on pages 130-131)*, and Hewson's *Nebulus* looked clever, featuring some ingenious circular scrolling.

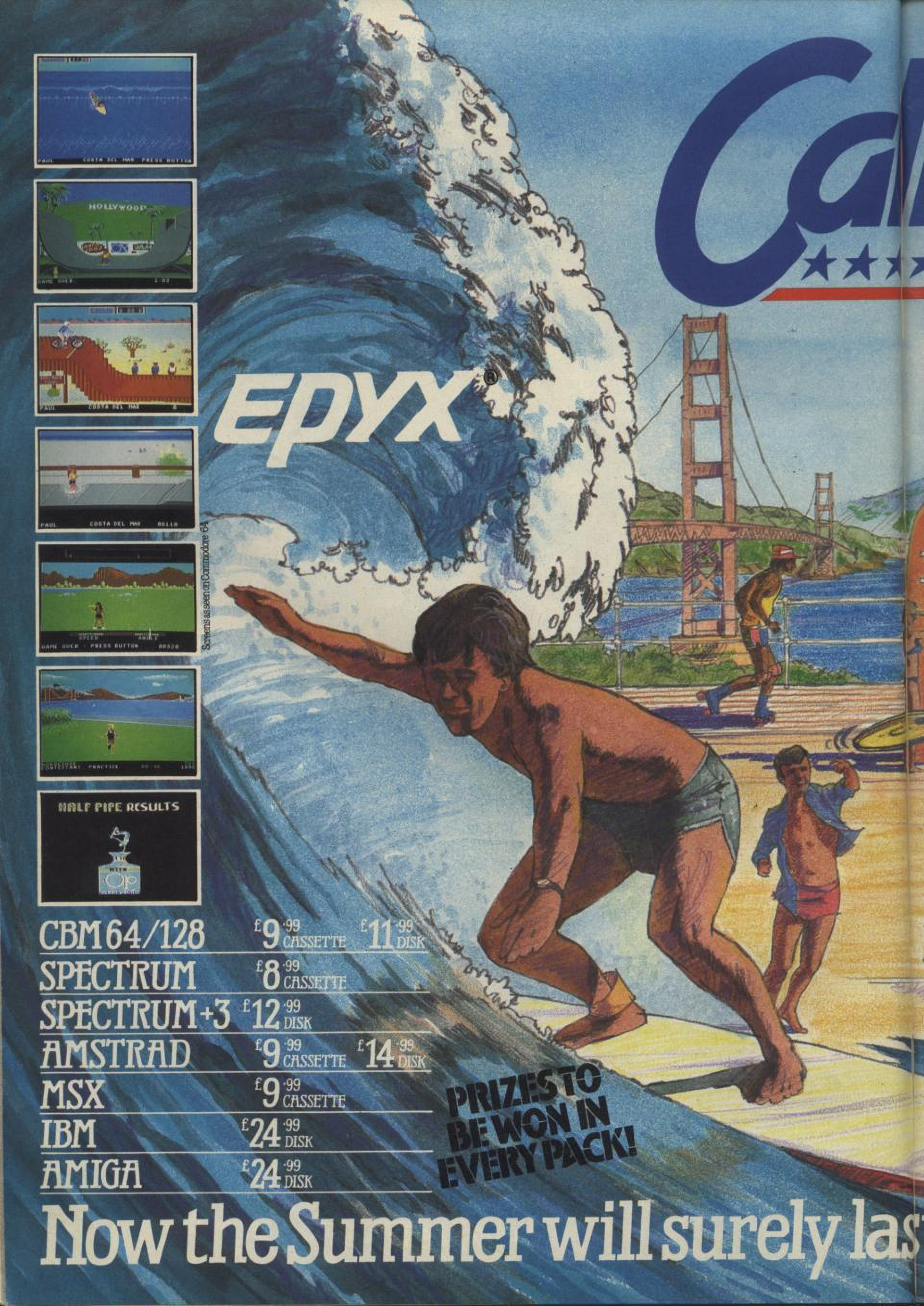
The very playable *Marble Madness* was very attractive in its Amiga incarnation, and of course there were the Newsfield stands, which this year were manned by real celebrities (as opposed to last year when I hadn't heard of anybody that I saw there).

The *PCW* Show is as much fun as it's always been. Just make sure you go in there with your eyes wide open, laugh off the silly razzmatazz of the big stands, and take absolutely nothing there seriously. You'll have yourself a great day out.

See you there next year . . . balloons and all.

ANTHONY BAILEY


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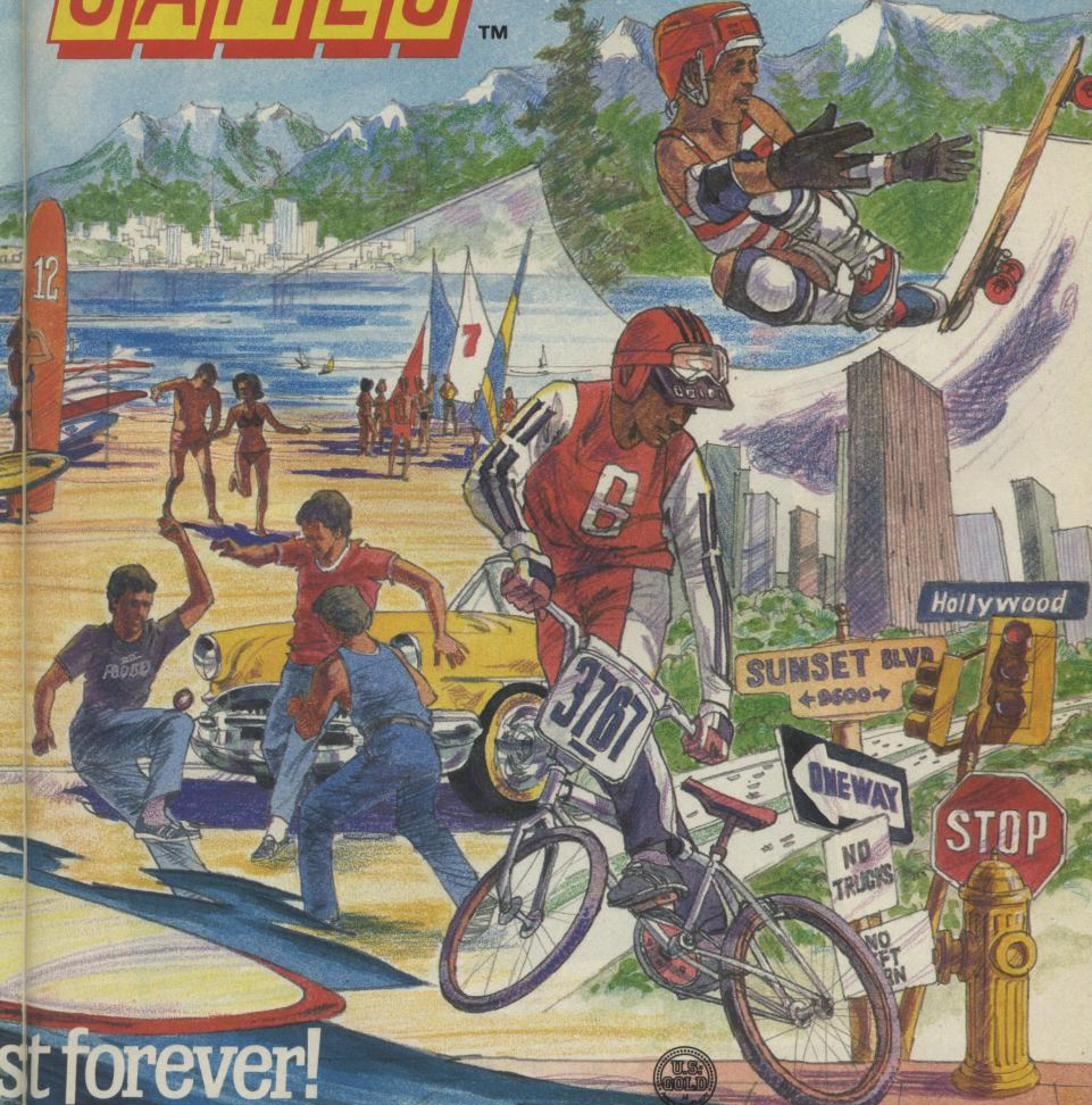
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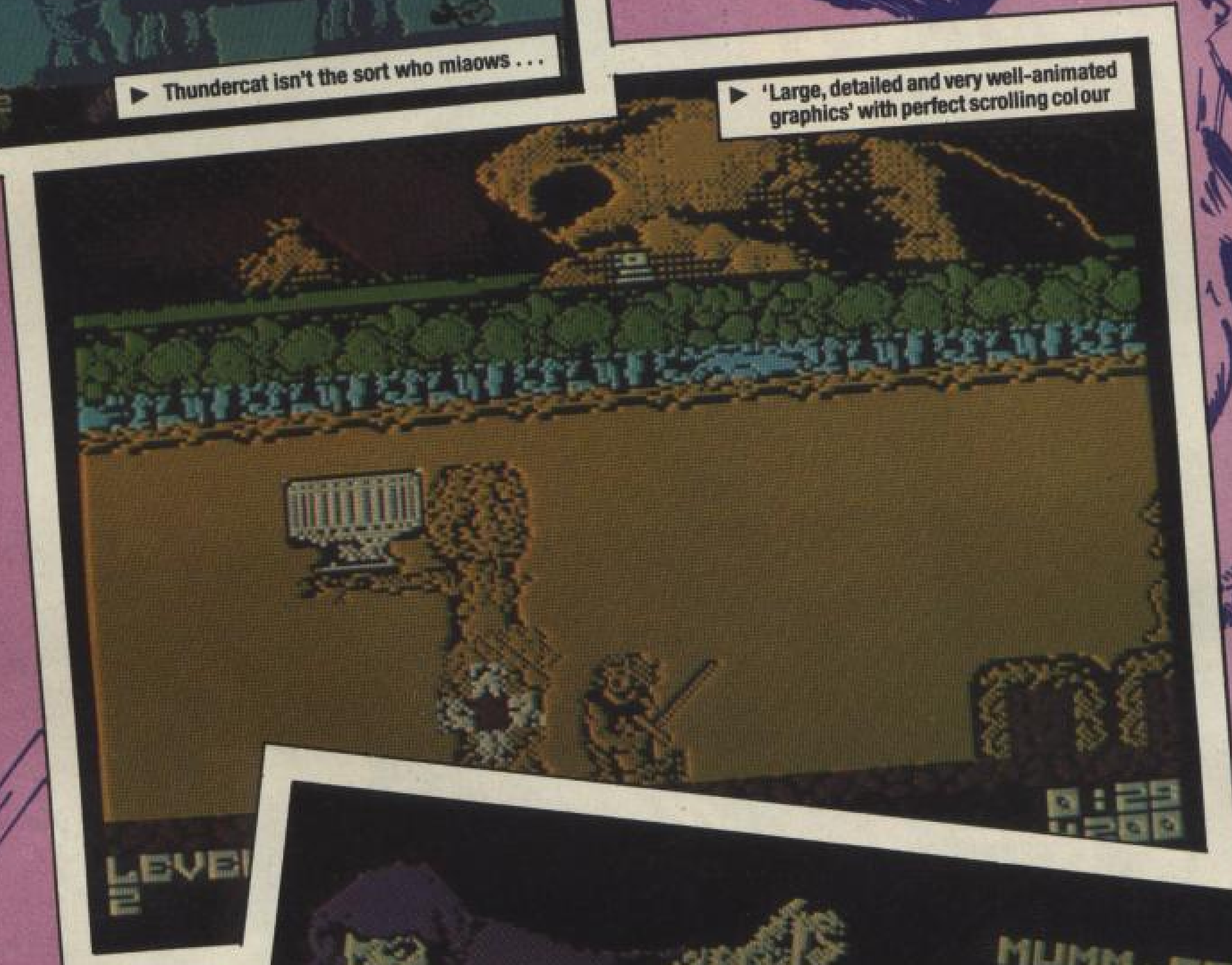
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T·H·U·N·D·E·R·



► Thundercat isn't the sort who miaows . . .





► 'Large, detailed and very well-animated graphics' with perfect scrolling colour





► *Thundercats*: the quest to vanquish Mumm-Ra's evil

Producer: **Elite**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Gargoyle Games**

C·A·T·S

A CRASH Smash

Mumm-Ra holds the Eye Of Thundera. Thundercat must search for it . . . and take it. But the warrior's quest is not to be easy, despite his six lives, for Mumm-Ra's burly thugs and dirty dwarfs and flapping bats and ugly hags are lined up against this hunk of he-man. And their every touch is lethal.

Undeterred by such astronomic odds, Thundercat runs onward through underground hallways, along stone walkways and across open plains; he leaps upward over

CRITICISM

" There's the hallmark of Gargoyle's programming in Thundercats **– most notably in the large, detailed and very well-animated graphics. It's one of those games which you'll think is just too hard when you first play it, but after a bit of practice there shouldn't be much difficulty getting through at least three levels. The action is fast, and you'll need quick reactions.** Thundercats **is probably the best thing Elite has produced since** Ghosts 'N' Goblins. **"**

RICKY **91%**

streams and ducks downward beneath the touch of hideous things.

Thundercat begins this TV licence with just a sword, which he must wield with increasing dexterity as Mumm-Ra's cohorts attack from all sides. But as our hero progresses he can take advantage

CRITICISM

" I can't say I've heard of these Thundercat chappies (though apparently they're pretty popular) – I must be a bit too old – so I can't really comment on the tie-in side of Thundercats. **But on its own merits it succeeds admirably. The graphics can't be faulted: the screen is extremely colourful and the animation topnotch. The imposing enemies change from level to level so you never know what to expect, which makes you have just one more go . . . great stuff! I bet the TV series ain't as good as the game."**

PAUL **91%**

CRITICISM

" Wow! Thundercats **is brilliant. The logo is very neatly drawn, and the in-game graphics match it; they're excellent in every respect. Considering that the programmers had to move the colour as well as the pixels, the scrolling is very smooth. At first, despite** Thundercats**'s playability, I didn't think it'd last The Treatment and still be addictive, but two days later they had to prise me away from my Spectrum with a crowbar to make me write this comment! It's got weeks and weeks of playability just waiting to be used. And me, I'm still trying to finish the bonus screen after Level Two! "**

MIKE **92%**

of containers and items that conceal additional features. By destroying these with his weapon and then collecting what is revealed, Thundercat can add to his lives or obtain a different weapon, such as an energy-orb blaster.

A time limit is set for the completion of each level; if Thundercat successfully reaches the level's end, he is rewarded with a time bonus and a kill bonus, which depends on the number of foul fiends he has sent to meet their satanic maker.

At later levels, Thundercat can choose which perilous pathway he takes through the elements of earth, fire, air and water, and act as saviour to those who have been captured and held by the wickedness of Mumm-Ra.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: very detailed and beautifully-animated, with some neat digitised graphics
Sound: exhilarating tune and FX on 128K version – otherwise limited
Options: definable keys
General rating: a good-looking and exciting game that deserves to succeed

Presentation	92%
Graphics	90%
Playability	90%
Addictive qualities	92%
OVERALL	**91%**

XOR

Producer: **Logotron**
Retail price: **£7.95**

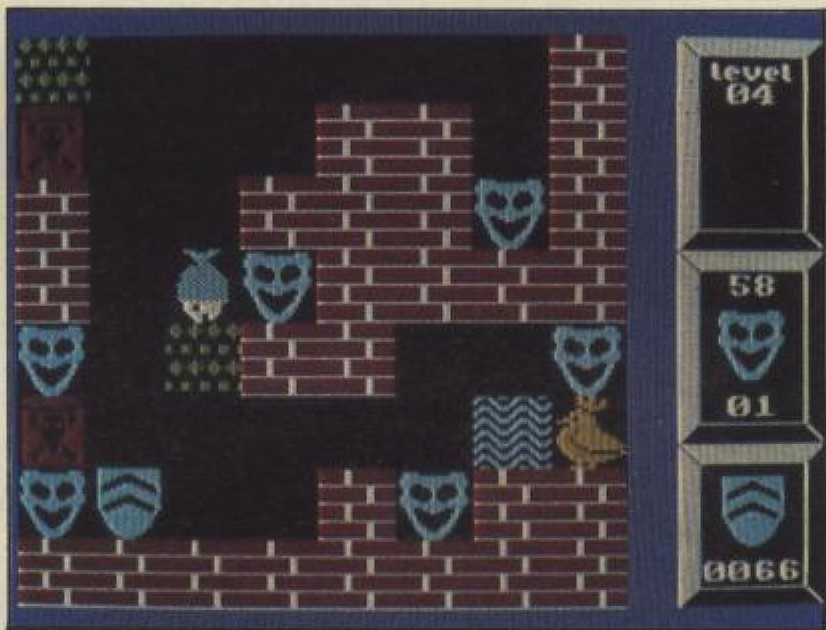
XOR presents the challenge of 15 brickwork mazes through which the player searches for masks, clearing each maze of masks before progressing to the next.

Clues can also be found in the form of map sections which show the maze you're in and the uncollected masks. Some routes are blocked by barriers that cannot be penetrated; other barriers can be broken through by the shield

NICK

" XOR's graphics are very simple, but it's addictive and the presentation is slick. It's a lot like a larger version of Cavelon, **a very early Ocean game. Toggling between two characters – if you can call them that when they're only shields – is supposed to make your task easier, but it doesn't a bit. The only useful feature is the map that shows where all the uncollected masks are hiding, and because the screens are all basically the same it soon gets very boring. "**

50%



► **Collecting the clues to '*XOR*'s true nature'**

you operate. But none of these obstructions appear on the map screen – and the number of moves on each level is limited.

are collected, they form an anagram which can be solved to give 'a clue to *XOR*'s true nature' (Logotron's words).

BEN

" XOR **is a puzzle game in the genre of** Survivors. **It's well difficult, but becomes quite playable with perseverance – some of the later levels are much too tricky for me, though, so I gave in a fit of rage. The simplistic large characters and a fast but disconcerting scrolling routine leave little impression; I'd advise a few goes before buying. "**

63%

Further dangers await on higher levels. Springloaded chicks can pin you to a wall, dolls and fish fall when a supporting shield or shelf is removed, bombs explode and poison pits offer uninviting swims.

On exiting each level, you receive a letter; when all 15 letters

MIKE

" Despite poor scrolling, XOR **isn't as bad as it might first strike you; the graphics are big and quite colourful, and the gameplay soon grows in attraction and addictivity. "**

60%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: simple but large and colourful
Sound: average tune and sound FX
Options: you can start on any level
General rating: a challenging puzzle game with little long-term appeal

Presentation	66%
Graphics	50%
Playability	60%
Addictive qualities	60%
OVERALL	**58%**

OUTCAST

Producer: **CRL**
Retail price: **£8.95**

Forced from his village and dispossessed of his powers by evil, an old wizard is left to wander in the wilds, rejected and despised. But slowly, so slowly, wizardry begins to trickle once more through his narrowing veins, filling him a with new-found confidence. Returning to his home village he vows to restore his lost powers to their full vigour and take revenge upon the evil force that vanquished him.

The village is now inhabited by loathsome birds and malevolent dwarfish entities, hungry for the wizard's four lives.

The red energy spheres that occasionally appear can be collected to replenish these reserves, but imprudent wizardly wanderings into the chasms, de-energising areas, and water pits that rupture the roads quickly deplete them again as the wizard struggles for survival.

Our becloaked warlock can protect his ancient bones with his basic energy spell; this magic destroys some creatures, but others are merely stung into temporary retreat.

The wizard progresses through his village world using a series of teleporters. Objects that he comes across can add to his magical capabilities or increase his powers of attack, and with these new strengths the wizard can battle his way through the possessed village, an onscreen indicator showing how much of this strange world he has completed.

BEN

" Outcast is addictive and fun. Perhaps it's because I never get very far with each life that I want another go; perhaps it's the smooth graphics, moving at the right pace; perhaps it's even the easy-to-understand gameplay; whatever it is, I find Outcast **very worthwhile. "**

86%

PAUL

" At first sight it seems Outcast **might be something a bit special – the colourful graphics are well-designed and with the animated trees create an attractive atmosphere. But the problem is the lack of things to do. The enemies have no intelligence (do they ever?); they just float around waiting to be *pushed* off the screen with an 'arrow'. And it's a pity about the animation of the eponymous character – he looks really stupid when flying through the air! "**

42%





► **The age-old struggle between good and evil lies behind *Outcast*'s fine graphics and medievally slow gameplay**

MIKE

" Outcast **is, as the title suggests, fit only to be cast out from the ranks of popular software. It's quite easy to play, but I found it difficult to amass any significant score. The onscreen animation – stars, branches of trees – is quite pretty, but frustratingly you can play for ages without getting anywhere. There just isn't enough content in** Outcast. **"**

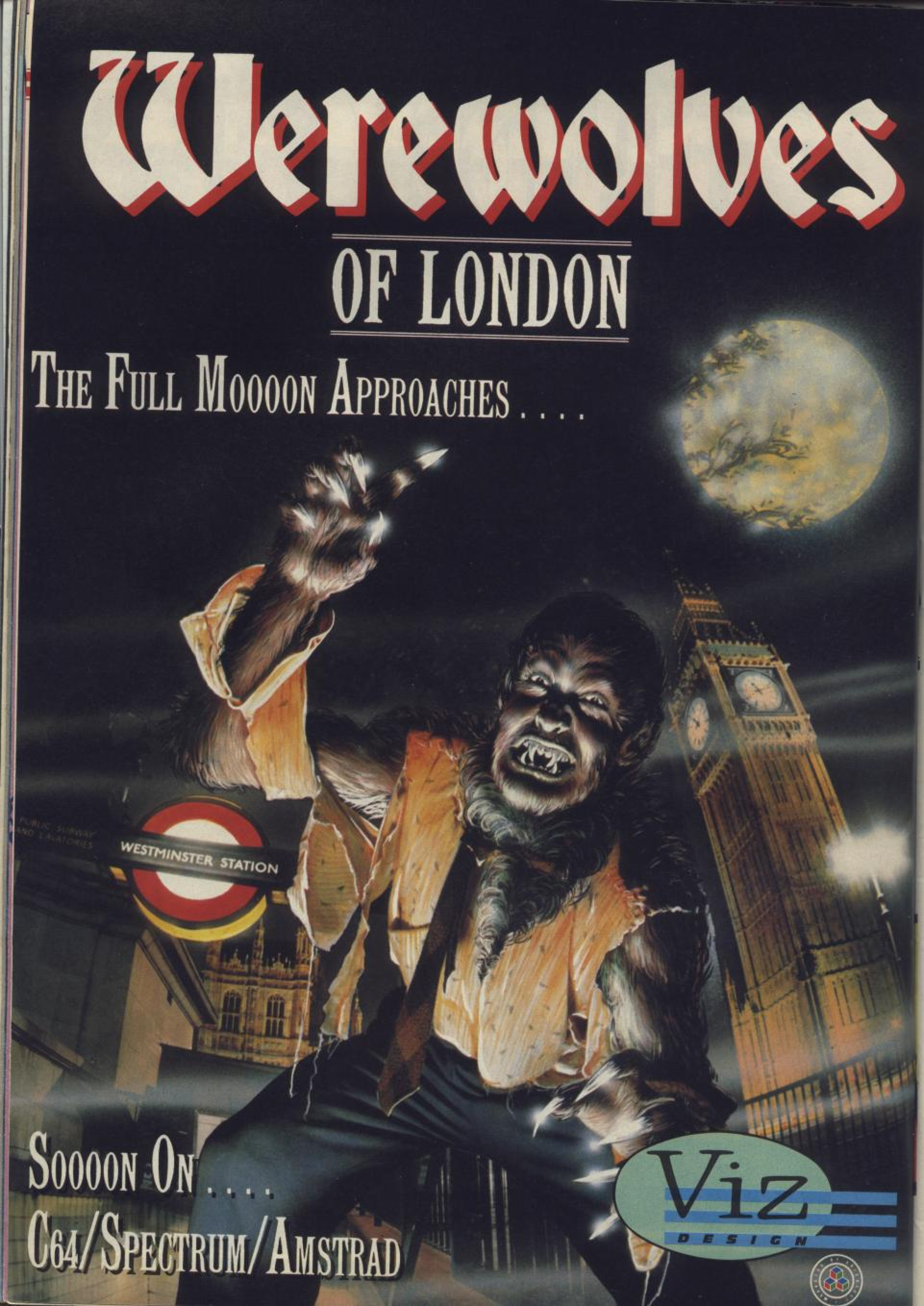
59%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair **Graphics:** very ornate but a bit jerky
Sound: good
Options: definable keys
General rating: not fast on action, but an enjoyable arcade adventure nonetheless

Presentation	78%
Graphics	69%
Playability	60%
Addictive qualities	59%
OVERALL	**62%**


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MYSTERY OF THE NILE

Producer: **Firebird**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Zigurat**

Oh, that wicked Abu-Sahl, his mother said he would come to no good . . . and now he's stolen the Jewel Of Luxor, more treasured than the pyramids and a lot more nickable. This Egyptian Arthur Daley intends to flog the precious chunk of rock for a fortune, and he must be stopped.

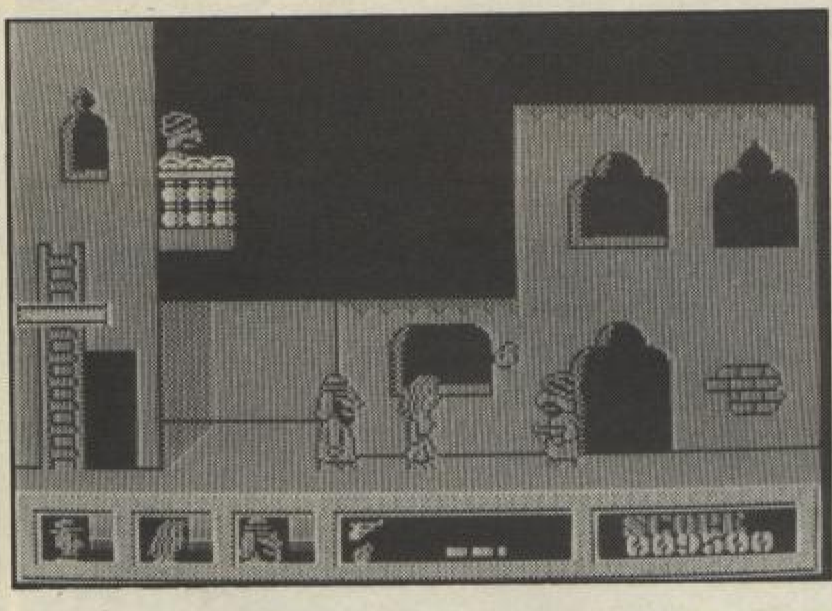
Archaeologist Nevada Smith, his assistant Janet Dwight and Al-Hasan, a peculiar hanger-on, are the only people who can thwart the evil one's plans to swell his building-society account. Each has different abilities with which to combat Abu-Sahl's guards, who seem to spring from every nook and cranny.

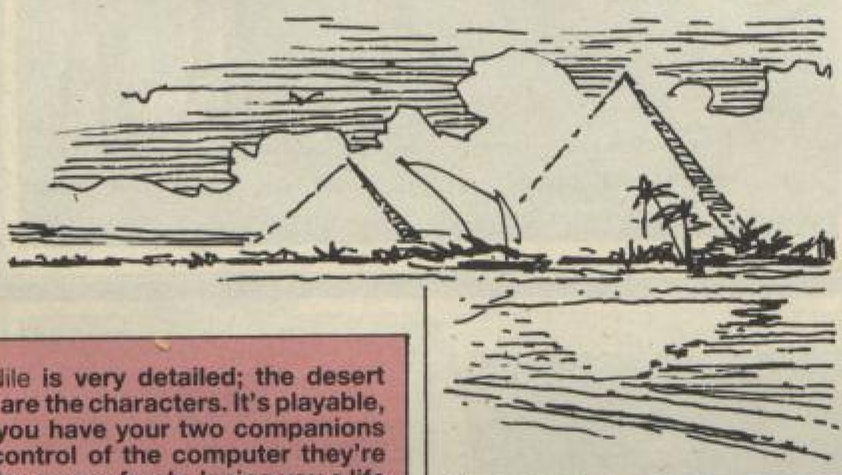
Beautiful Janet is first into the action; if wily enough to escape the clutches of the early marauding miscreants she can collect Al-Hasan and then Nevada from their hiding places. These two then follow in her wake, more often a hindrance in their positioning than a help, till a character switch is made and one of them can take the lead.

Indiana – sorry, Nevada Smith and his companions can gather the weapons that they find about them, such as grenades and guns, and with them deal lethal injury to Abu-Sahl's henchmen, all of whom must be killed on each screen.

Nev, Jan and Al each have four lives that are reduced by imprudent contact with a bullet or dynamite stick fired or flung by those dirty bad guys.

Together they can defeat the awful Abu-Sahl; together they can also get themselves into a lot of trouble.



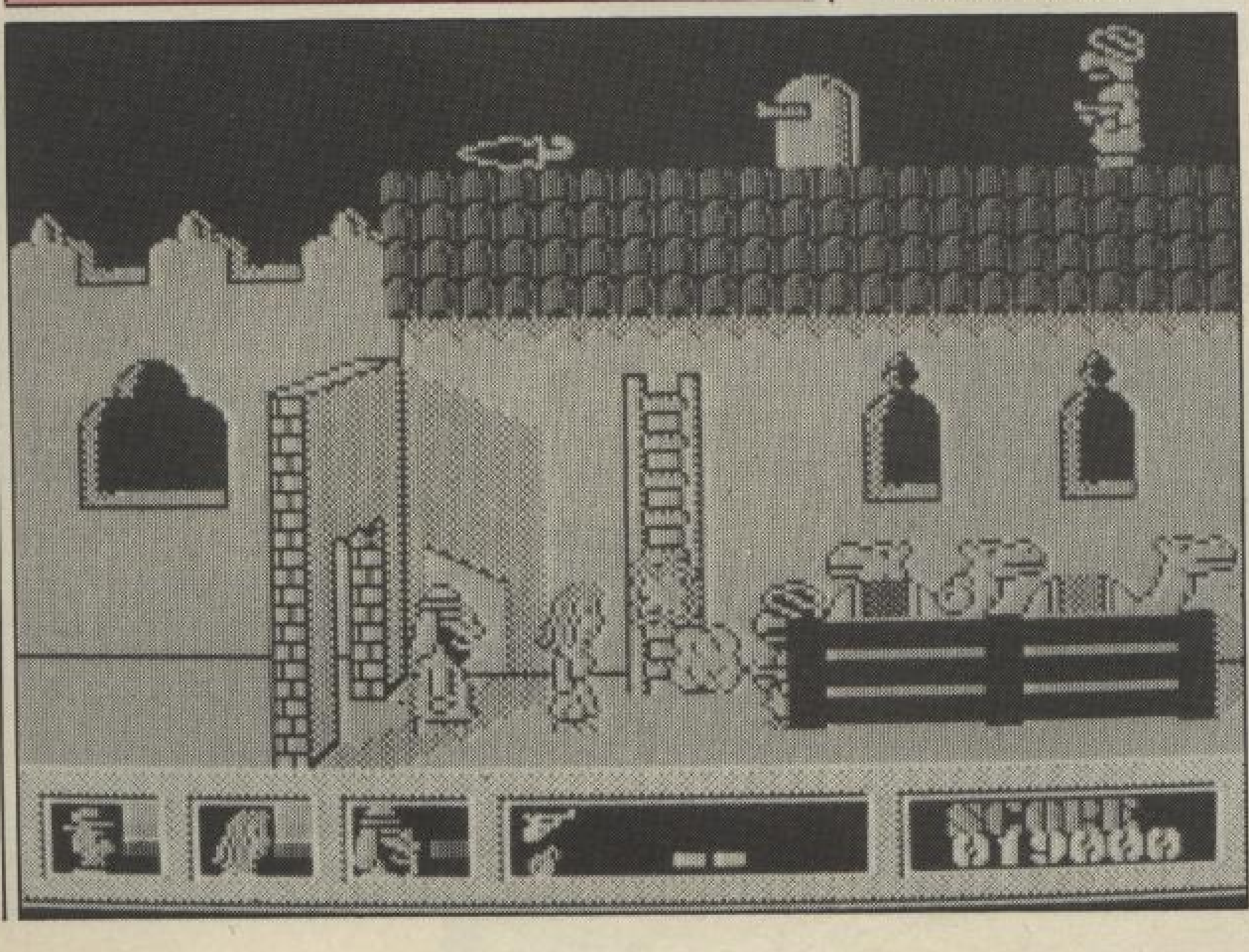


RICKY

" Graphically, Mystery Of The Nile **is very detailed; the desert backdrops are captured well, as are the characters. It's playable, but becomes frustrating when you have your two companions bumbling around – under the control of the computer they're incredibly stupid and walk into the enemy freely, losing you a life in the process. Still,** Mystery Of The Nile **could be a relaxing alternative for the hardened shoot-'em-up fanatic. "**

72%

▶ **You're Janet Dwight about to do in the camel-dealers in this scene from** *Mystery Of The Nile*



PAUL

" Immediately I thought of US Gold's Zorro: **a predominantly yellow screen, lots of little detailed and well-animated characters and a strong feeling of a hot and sweaty atmosphere. The screen arrangement is well-structured, with colour clearly-defined – ruling out clash and also keeping the display lively.** Mystery Of The Nile **is a very simple problem-solving game, the better for the quick flick-screen technique, and it certainly has character – though its lastability is doubtful. "**

70%

NICK

" Mystery Of The Nile **is a fantastically addictive little game with cute graphics and some really good tunes thrown in. It's a bit confusing at the start, but with a bit of help from Paul Sumner (or my Playing Tips) you'll soon be on your way to completing it. The three main characters are excellently drawn and move around well. Though it's very simple, like a kid's cartoon, you'll get some enjoyment out of** Mystery Of The Nile. **"**

80%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston
Graphics: clean and well-defined with imaginative backdrops
Sound: rambling jolly tune, but meagre spot FX
General rating: a simple arcade adventure with humorous touches

Presentation	82%
Graphics	77%
Playability	65%
Addictive qualities	67%
OVERALL	**74%**

ACTION FORCE

Producer: **Virgin Games**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Gang Of Five**

Botsneda is an island under siege. COBRA has launched an attack and vital data has been left on a computer disk in the occupied zone, in this licence from the eponymous toys.

Flint, Lady Jaye and Quick Kick have been sent in using an AWE Striker craft to get that disk. To allow greater speed, the AWE has had its weaponry removed, so Snake Eyes must defend the craft from above, manoeuvring with the aid of a multidirectional helipack.

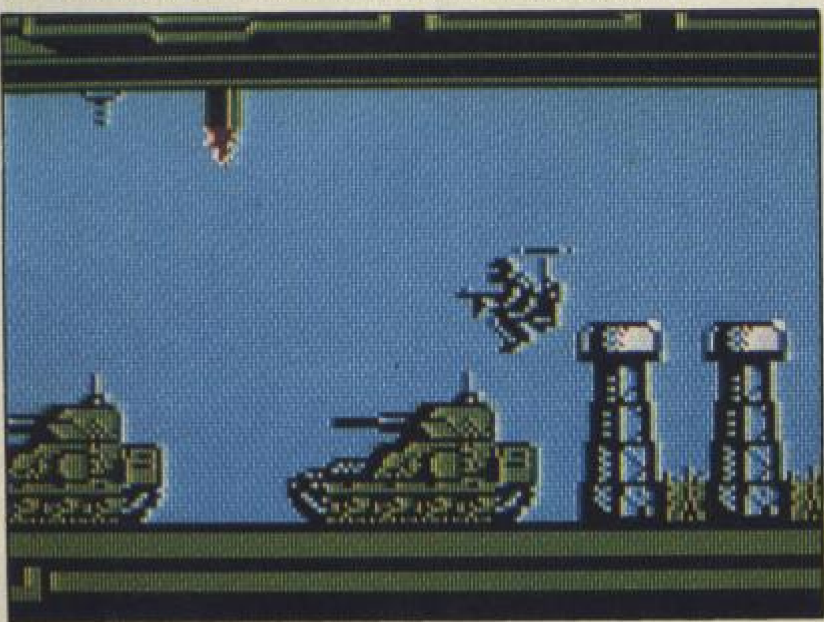
The way ahead is difficult for even the AWE and a path must be cleared through the forest of electrical-charge-generators, barricades and rocket silos.

Snake Eyes is equipped with a powerful gun, with which he can take out ground-to-air missiles fired from the silos (though if he's hit by one of the deadly projectiles, he loses one of his four lives). With this weapon he can also blast out sections of electrical discharges and barricades, and earn points by piercing the targets that hang in the sky. However, if this hovering warrior flies into one before he's burst it, yet another life is removed from his meagre stock.

Concrete barriers seriously impede the progress of the AWE Striker, and open stretches of canal water cannot be crossed at all by the land-based vehicle. So pontoon bridge sections must be picked and carried by Snake Eyes to where they are needed. With a bridge complete, the Striker can move on.

Snake Eyes cannot be too profligate in his use of ammunition and fuel; his supplies are strictly limited. A warning is given when his fuel reserve has fallen to dangerous levels. Both ammunition and fuel can be topped up, but neither should be picked up prematurely as already full tanks and magazines cannot take more.

► That's Snake Eyes in his helithingy, defending the AWE Striker



CRITICISM

● " *Action Force* is just too-oo-o-o hard. You're always on the move – there's no stopping in midflight for a quick read of *The Independent*, and though the idea is simple the awkward control method makes its appeal short-lived – especially for the age group at which the toys are aimed. And I can't really say this'll make me go out and buy the toys either! "
PAUL **41%**

● " Action Force **is a really well-presented, pathetic game. Once you've got past the slick ACTION*FORCE writing and music it looks, and plays, just like Durell's now ageing** Harrier Attack **(from preCRASH days). The houses and the main character are very crude and simplistic, and the scrolling and the irritating way the bombs explode up your posterior (Nick**

ANGLEBALL

Producer: **M.A.D.**
Retail price: **£2.99**

Pool can never be the same again after you've taken your cue to a hexagonal table.

As in the standard game, coloured balls have to be hit into six pockets using the white cue ball. A cursor is used to align the cue ball and a coloured object ball with the pocket. By creating the right angle the coloured ball can be hit into a pocket. Six of the coloured balls may be hit into the pockets in any order, but the black must be left till last, or a foul shot is incurred and the game lost.

Different types of spin (top, side and back) can be given to the cue ball, causing it to react after striking the coloured ball. In this way a good position can be achieved for the next shot. A shot's strength is regulated by altering the length of the cue in the box at the bottom right of the screen.

For every ball potted, points are awarded. When all the balls on the table have been potted the frame is over and another one can be played with a different arrangement of balls. (A frame-designer allows you to add your own ball arrangements.) If three shots are missed, the game is over and it's time to hang up your cue.

A frame-designer allows you to set up your own starting position.

► The English always form cues



BYM

" The new-style hexagonal snooker table makes computer snooker easier, bringing the idea of clearing away all the balls within the realms of possibility. It doesn't take as long to get bored with Angleball **as it does with every other snooker game (including the televised, professional type). But perhaps the strength factor needs a bit of tweaking – I find that either you give the shot full power and the cue ball trickles along into the hole, or you try to kiss the pink and the cue ball trickles along till it comes within close range of a ball. And if you do happen to make a mistake, or find a screen where you can't get a clear break, you'll need more than the stingy three misses you're allowed. Still, this is the best snooker simulation yet. "**

60%

NICK

" Well, what is Angleball**? Is it some type of hexagonal snooker? Has Dennis Taylor got to get a pair of even weirder glasses? Well, actually it's quite a good simulation. Do you remember way, way back when a game just called** Snooker **was released (the days of no loading screens!)? This one's very similar. The balls are all different colours, and as usual in simulations, there's plenty of colour clash. And when you hit a ball with your cue it doesn't roll, it just hovers! But once you've got used to it you can get a lot of fun out of** Angleball**. It's one to play on a rainy night (probably in Ludlow, where 99.9% of the rain falls!). "**

42%

Roberts's Daft Dictionary) make up a bad game with no lastability. "
NICK **24%**

● "Action Force *comes as a unwelcome surprise from the Gang Of Five, though the front end is very pleasant indeed. Unfortunately the game itself lacks substance, and jerky, if colourful, graphics do little to entice you into it.* "
RICKY **39%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: colourful, but the scrolling is jerky
Sound: little
Options: definable keys
General rating: too difficult, unattractive and a wasted licence

Presentation	48%
Graphics	28%
Playability	23%
Addictive qualities	23%
OVERALL	**35%**

PAUL

" A nice variation on snooker, this, though I can't really see people going out in their droves to purchase it. I'd love to play the full-size table version – the computer version seems to have quite a bit of trouble when working out the correct angles from your spin, speed and table position. The one-player game is the most challenging, and though Angleball **will be fun for the snooker/pool/eight-ball fanatics, it won't be too attractive to anyone else. "**
51%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: simple but clear
Sound: informative bells and whistles
Options: redefinable keys, one or two players or one player versus computer, frame-designer
General rating: a neat snooker variation

Presentation	66%
Graphics	50%
Playability	60%
Addictive qualities	50%
OVERALL	**51%**

PROFESSIONAL SKI SIMULATOR

Producer: **Code Masters**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Authors: **The Oliver Twins**

When a professional skier's in Austria he can't keep off the Alpine slopes. So you don your ski pants and padding, pick up your freshly-waxed skis and set off for the slopes. Your first piste is Saalbach, a relatively easy course.

But ice, snow banks, sheds, trees and flags are all placed to give minimum moving space and if you accidentally slip you can plummet for ages, missing the flags, and get disqualified.

You're off down the course at a terrifying speed and you just miss an old shed. While your swearing wafts into the chilled air a set of flags loom on the horizon. You remember what the instructor said: 'You must pass through every set of flags to qualify for the next piste and get your money's worth.' So you pass the flags, but what's this hurtling toward you?

It's a very awkward-looking Christmas tree that doesn't want to move. Before you know it, you're stopped suddenly in your tracks by the tree without so much as a 'sorry'; the instructor shouts down 'you're disqualified!' and you're carried off on a stretcher.

In *Professional Ski Simulator* you can choose one-player or two-player mode. The skiing is easy but getting every single flag is a mite more difficult, and you're timed on each piste. The time limits get tougher the further you progress.

It's presented in bird's-eye view. The left and right controls refer to the skier's view rather than the player's – he is skiing 'toward' the player – so when you press LEFT or move the joystick left he goes toward the right of the screen and vice versa.

If you ski too slow you can go off the screen, and then have to play using the radar – a touch of unreality, though the game is supposedly 'based on the authors' experiences in Austria'!

NICK

" This simulation is so good it's just like being on the slopes. The graphics are very similar to those in BMX Simulator**, also by The Oliver Twins and from Code Masters. The slopes are highly detailed, which makes it nice to look at, but tricky to ski down! The only problem is that when you fall behind, or get too far ahead, for that matter, you go off the screen because it scrolls down slowly without caring where the player is. And the radar's very confusing. So you have to be patient to get anywhere in this excellent game, but don't forget – practice makes perfect! "**
87%

ROBIN

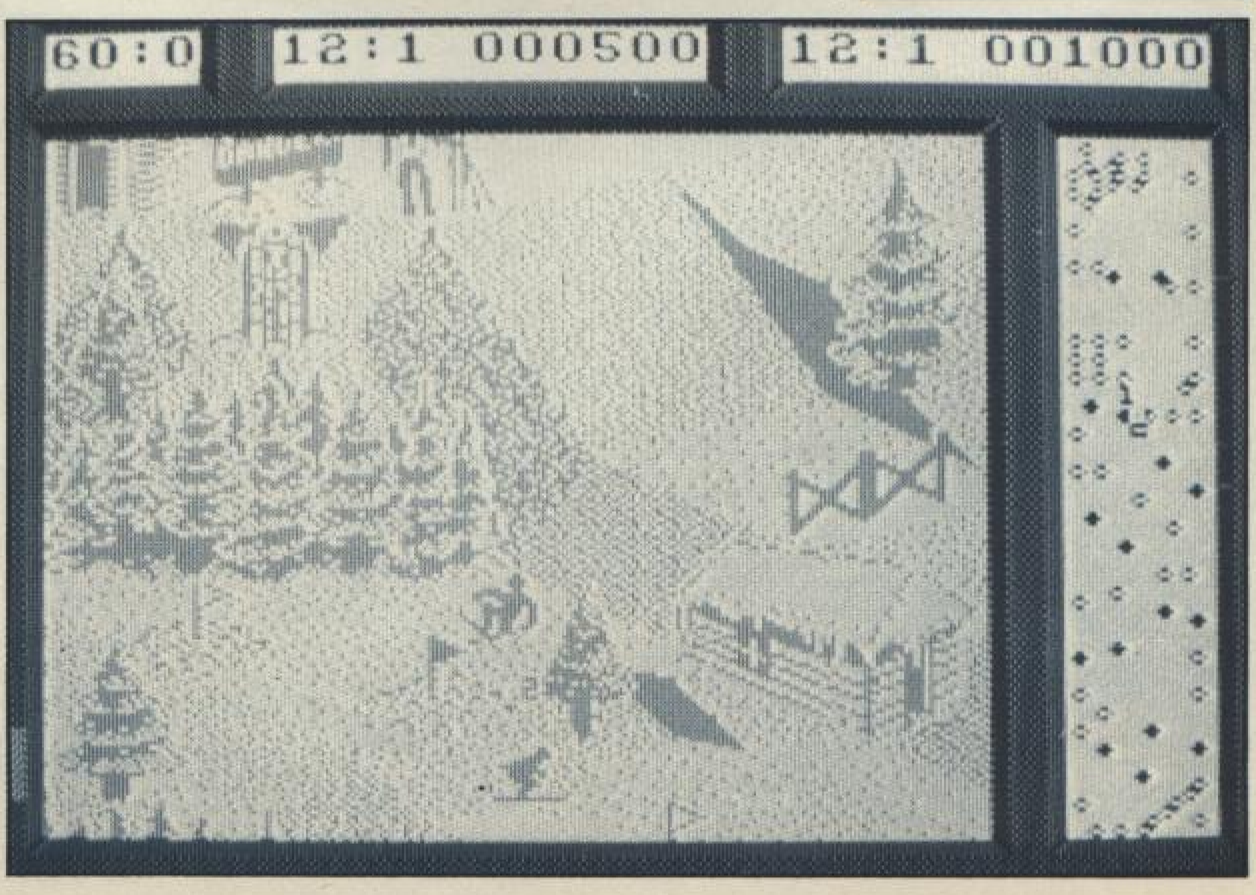
" Skiing isn't the easiest of sports to simulate; Pete Cooke tried two-and-a-half years ago with Ski Star 2000 **(Issue 14) and came up with a pleasing 3-D game. Here the different types of snow and a sense of three dimensions are created quite effectively by the clever use of shading. It takes a while to get the hang of the game, and the way the screen scrolls downward regardless of what's happening on screen is also frustrating. But once the controls have been mastered** Professional Ski Simulator **is an enjoyable and difficult maze game, though it offers little long-term interest. "**
71%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: monochromatic and well-detailed
Sound: good in-game tune
Options: definable keys, one or two players
General rating: a challenging, playable simulation with some frustrating flaws

Presentation	75%
Graphics	77%
Playability	82%
Addictive qualities	79%
OVERALL	**79%**

► **It looks very easy till you're on the slope**



BALLBREAKER

Producer: **CRL**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **The Zen Room**

Into a 3-D screen drops a ball. You control a bat that can be moved along one edge of the screen to prevent the sphere dropping into the black void which lies behind your bat. Should the ball pass you, then one of your four lives is lost.

If you use the bat to deflect the ball onto the barrier of blocks that faces you, most of the blocks can be destroyed, sending the ball rebounding toward your bat.

BYM

" Ballbreaker is definitely the best version of Breakout on the market. But is a brilliant rebirth of an age-old concept worth £7.95? I think not. Despite graphics of the highest quality, squash versus computer doesn't stand up against blasting aliens out of the sky: and the sudden appearance of hopping kangaroos and whizzing spikes is a feeble attempt to liven up this game. "

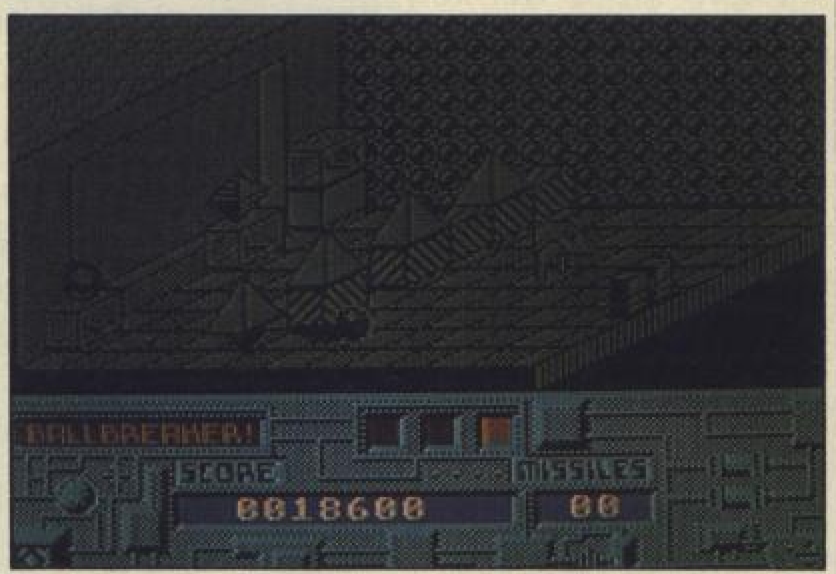
60%

BEN

" Ballbreaker is based on a brilliant idea – 3-D Breakout. What could be better? Play is difficult, to say the least: the ball is dropped into play, it shoots off toward the edge of the screen and if you're not quick you'll lose your first life. The speed of the ball varies, depending on the number of things moving onscreen and on whether you've collected a speed-up block, and this can be disconcerting. But after a few hours of play Ballbreaker will grab you – honest. "

70%

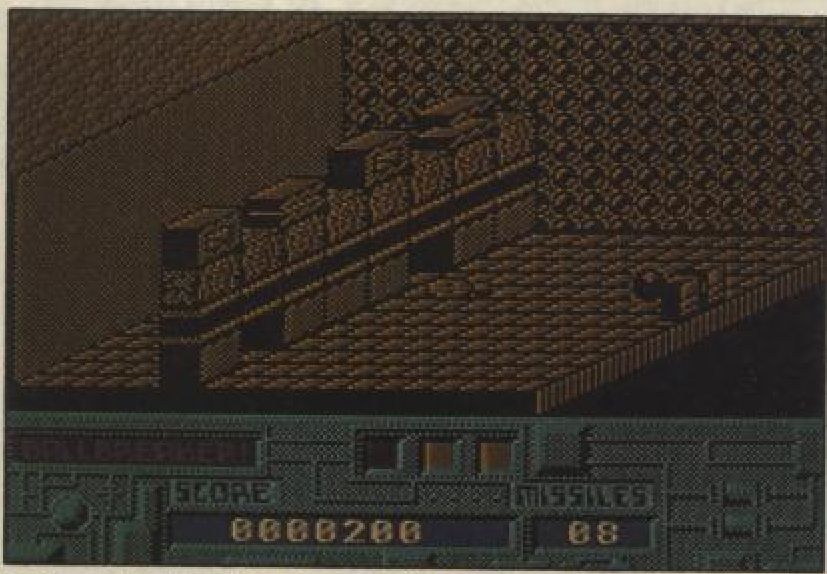
Those blocks that do not submit to the sphere's deadly touch can be destroyed by one of the missiles that you carry – you start the game with ten. Points are awarded for every block destroyed.



► *Ballbreaker* – **3-D** *Breakout!*

If the ball passes through a gap in the wall, falling blocks can temporarily halt its return. But the sphere continues to make destructive contact with the rear of the wall till it has opened a passage back to your side of the wall, where once again you must move fast to hit it.

Different blocks have different properties. Some are destroyed from the front; others can only be destroyed from the rear; some offer extra lives or missiles, others change the size of your bat or allow you to exit to the next screen. On higher levels, the destruction of certain bricks activates aliens who



▶ Slow and unplayable, or the best of its genre?

PAUL

" You can go only so far with a concept before the additions take over the original idea, and this is the main problem with Ballbreaker. **Working out the 3-D and collision-detection takes the computer so long that the game's playability suffers unbelievably. It's vital with** Breakout**-type games that the speed is kept constant and the rebound angle realistic –** Ballbreaker **fails on both these counts and this bad design is infuriating. I have nothing against the 3-D idea – it's surprisingly attractive – but changes should be improvements. "**

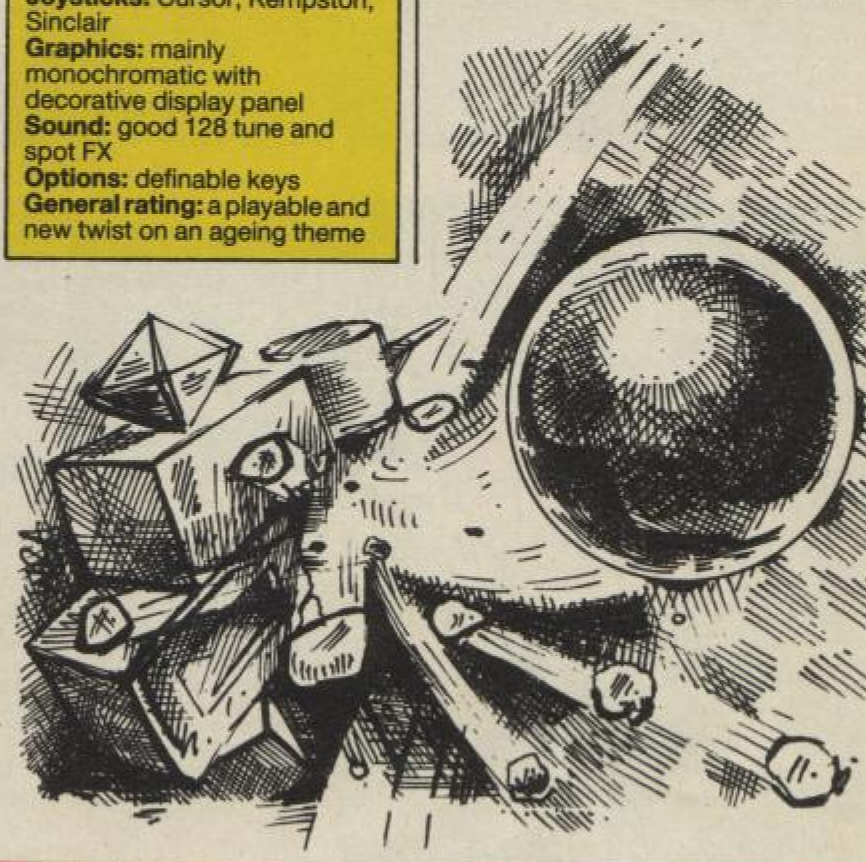
62%

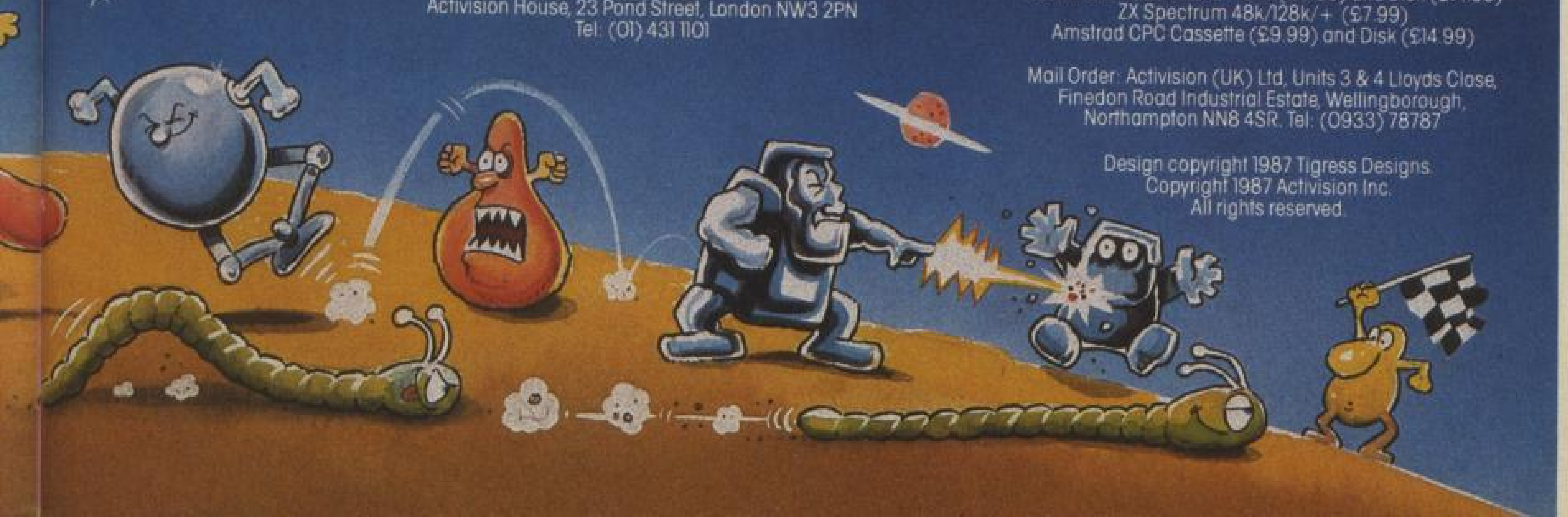
can easily remove one of your bat's lives with their lethal touch.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: mainly monochromatic with decorative display panel
Sound: good 128 tune and spot FX
Options: definable keys
General rating: a playable and new twist on an ageing theme

Presentation	79%
Graphics	77%
Playability	59%
Addictive qualities	61%
OVERALL	**64%**





GET TO GRIPS WITH

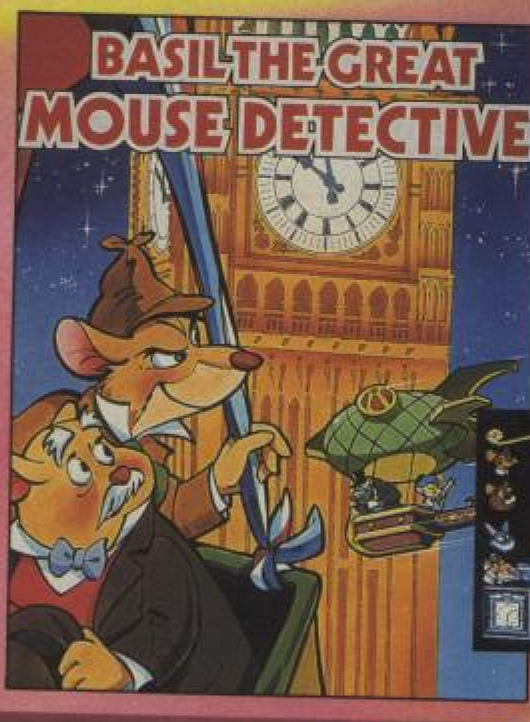




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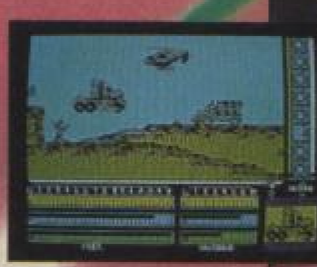


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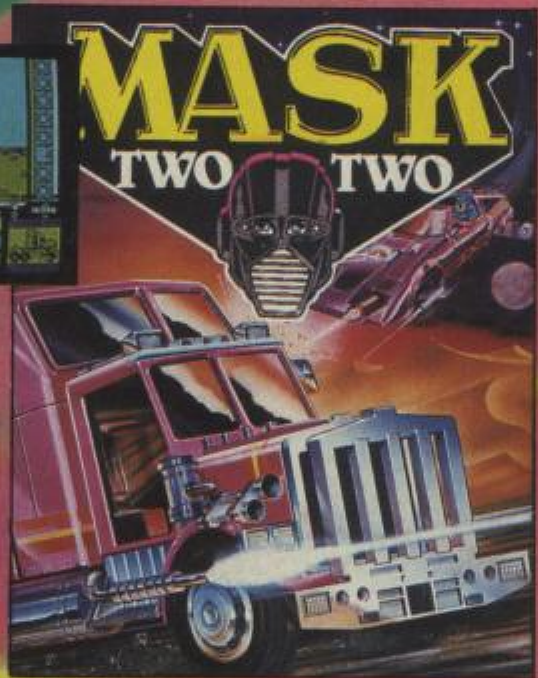
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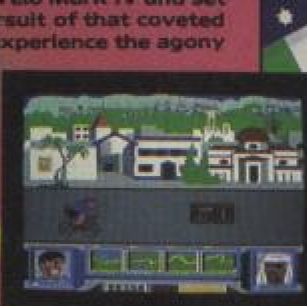


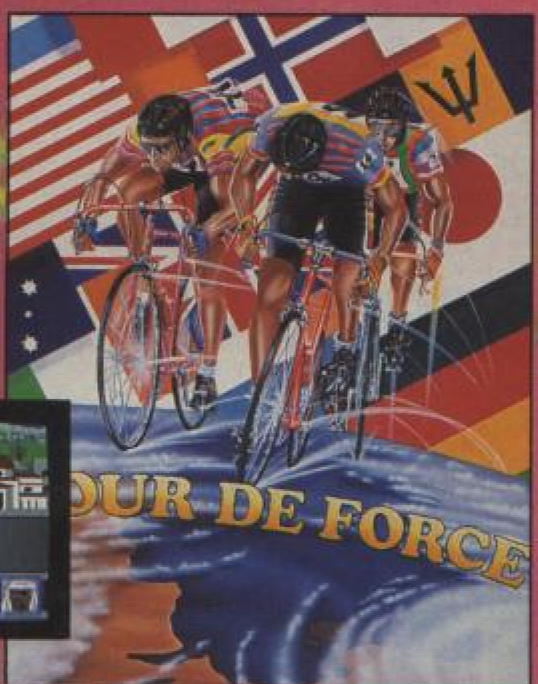
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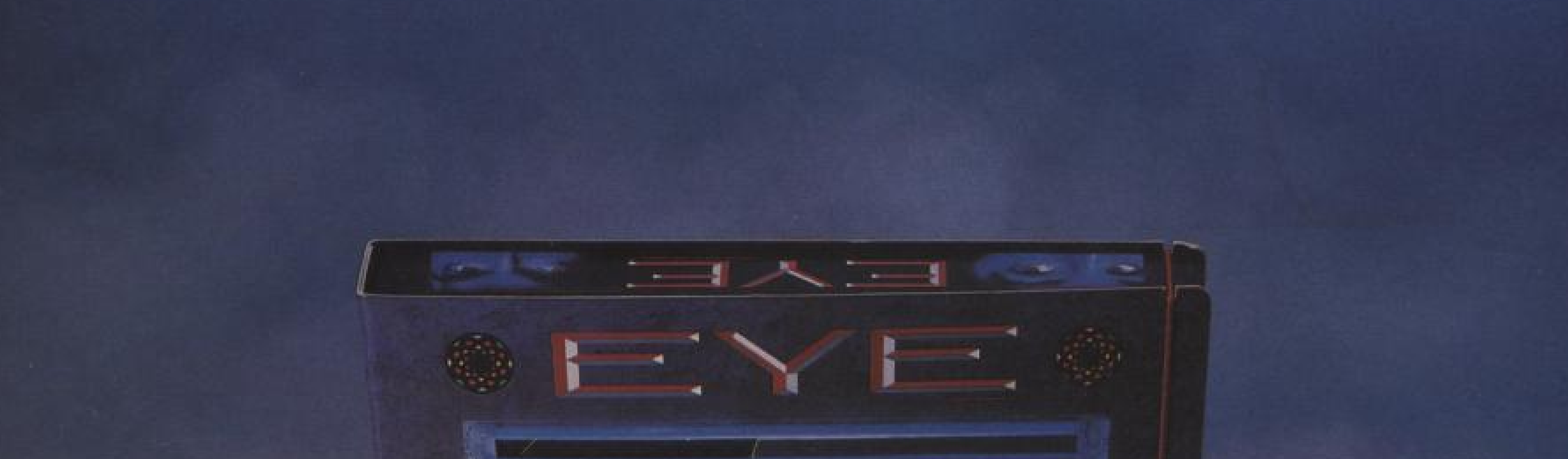
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(Lee Rodwell – The Times, September 1987)



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LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM



The autumn is with us and winter drawers on. Having just finished writing up a few of the earlier months of the year for the Christmas Special Lookback article, I'm reminded that the 'summer software slump' seemed late this year, and that it should have ended with the PCW Show. However, the quantity and quality of games received for review this issue seems to have been dire, with few notable exceptions. Honestly, one does expect something to brighten up the encroaching gloaming, and fires of fallen leaves cleared from around the winter vegetables isn't quite what I mean. Still, enough of my moans, I'm sure you've got plenty of your own! I'll kick off with the Letter Of The Month which has something to say about responsibility . . .

A REASONED VIEW

Dear Lloyd
Please do not dismiss this as another fanatical complaint; at least, not until you have considered it seriously.

Firstly, violence: I am not about to claim that Satan is possessing Oliver Frey, or that CRASH corrupts small children, I am merely offering some advice.

I'm not shocked by the artwork in CRASH, and neither, it seems, are most readers. But some people are. These people are mostly outsiders to the world of computers; parents who happen to see CRASH once in a while, or concerned Christians who see it on newsstands. It's all very well to make fun of these people, but their opinions count. The attitude of the general public towards computers, computer games and computer magazines is primarily one of either scorn – thinking the whole business to be infantile – disgust or outright hostility.

As I said, these people are outsiders, whose opinions are often misguided, but their views are becoming widespread. Recently an article in *The Guardian* condemned computer games for the same reasons as the writers of the letters in Issue 43 gave. Alongside the article was Oliver Frey's *Barbarian* illustration. I found the whole thing laughable, but at the same time I realised that many people would read and believe it. Mocking the people who complain is just escaping the problem; the computer world is getting a very bad reputation, and CRASH is just enforcing it.

Your CRASH History was a very timely reminder of what Oliver's artwork used to be like: can anyone honestly say they prefer the *Barbarian* cover to Issue 5. Even if you ignore the question of subject matter, the artwork is immeasurably better. It is cleaner and much more detailed, and in my opinion has never been equalled. What's wrong with a return to the old style? The early covers were dynamic, excellently drawn and above all, original.

If nothing else, this return would make CRASH more popular with parents and the general public.

Secondly, sexism: Of course, there's nothing dangerous or obscene about CRASH, but the attitude towards women you, the software houses and some readers seem to hold, is infantile, annoying and, to my mind, offensive.

The arrival of Hannah Smith was like the appearance of a girl in an all-boys comprehensive. Remarks about 'girlies', 'girlie perfume', 'girlie lipstick' and so on popped up everywhere. Obviously this was meant as a joke, but it just shows your team's immature attitude. There have been other instances since, but Issue 45 was particularly bad. The *Athena* review included phrases like 'voluptuous Athena, goddess of wisdom – worra woman', 'tired of cleaning her heavenly home', 'our bikini beauty', 'our dynamic damsel' and 'the curvaceous fighter'.

Okay, so reviews are supposed to be lively and punchy, but this smacks of Page Three. I don't know who wrote it, but whoever did should be advised that to be a hip jive (they all evidently want to keep up their reputations) you don't have to resort to schoolboy humour.

A small, but telling point, is the letter about the typical Game Over advert: 'the artwork was cunningly done over the . . . um . . . naughty parts'. Your reply mentions 'the offending part'. Is the word 'nipple' really so embarrassing? Oliver Frey's artwork worsens the situation: his illustration on pages 98-99 of Issue 44 was typical of his brand of pseudoporn. Just because Palace do it, do you have to follow?

All these points seem minor, but they paint a sorry picture of the computer world – populated by immature males who either lust for, or giggle at women.

I think I've backed up my points reasonably. CRASH is the leading computer magazine in the UK, can't you set an example to others?
Will Broker, London, SE18

As so much has already been said about the Barbarian *cover artwork, and indeed many other Oli Frey illustrations, I won't dwell on the subject, other than to say that your reasons for your unease do you credit Will.*

The Athena *review was obviously poking affectionate fun at the whole hyperbole of gods, goddesses, superheroes, ultraspeed arcade action etc, which in truth most CRASH review intros do. It's true that nearly all games have male heroes – the 'sexism in software' which was the subject of recent correspondence in the* Computer Trade Weekly *paper – but CRASH is only reviewing other people's product. The problem may manifest itself in these pages but it doesn't start with us. And if we said 'nipple' in CRASH – used in its most obvious context as a part of female anatomy – I've no doubt we would receive dozens of complaints far less rational than yours!*

Incidentally, the illustration referred to from Issue 44, was originally painted by Oliver as a background to a CRASH MICRO GAMES ACTION mail order advertisement placed in other magazines before CRASH magazine even started, so I'm not so sure whether your reference to a cleaner age for Oli really holds water!

Still Will, for being a rational Forum correspondent, and for raising some interesting points, I'm giving you the £30 software prize for Letter Of The Month. Let us know what you would like to receive.
LM

MISDIRECTED FOOTBALL

Dear Lloyd
As a busy father of three children, I don't get much time to play computer games, but one which has had me riveted over the last six months or so has been a game called *Football Director*. I was therefore amazed to see it reviewed in October's CRASH and given only 13%!

As a football strategy game, it easily surpasses all others and is far superior to the much-praised but out-of-date *Football Manager*. It is by far the most realistic and challenging game of its type.

My son Stephen (aged 12) agrees with me and has spent many, many hours playing the game. It certainly requires patience, thought, and the ability to suffer setbacks calmly, and it's not easy, but that is all part of its appeal!
Mike Gibbard, Sandford-On-Thames, Oxford

As is usually the case, personal taste dictates preferences, but before I give my answer, I had another outraged letter on the same subject . . .

Dear Lloyd
Upon reading through my latest CRASH I came across a review for *Football Director*. Ah! This will get a good review, I thought. But when I glanced across the page I noticed the rating of 13%. A printing error, I thought, but when I checked with the comments I realised this was no error. Have you gone mad?

I own well over 20 football games and I can tell you this is by far the best. Just because it has no graphics or sound doesn't make it rubbish. The colour is well used despite what your reviewer said, and it has five times as many features as *Football Manager*, although your reviewer was obviously too stupid to spot them (eg European Cups, £1,000,000 players to name only two).

And whoever reviewed this game must have a minimum knowledge of football due to the naming of the team – (ie 'Truckers'), and you even got the price wrong. I can strongly recommend this game to any football fan, and it's worth every penny.
Michael Sharkey (ex-CRASH reader), Stockport, Cheshire

You're probably right that naming the team 'Truckers' on our screen ▶



shot left us wide open to attack, but don't make the mistake of thinking that was a reviewer, for the screen shots are not the reviewers' department. On the other hand, I think you are picking on a rather unimportant point there.

Whilst I went along with Derek Brewster's oft-stated argument of some three years ago that just because adventures were written largely in BASIC, or because they used the unredefined Spectrum character set, that it didn't mean they couldn't do an adequate job – presentation isn't everything if the game underneath is great in itself. However, I fail to see why 'football manager' fans shouldn't get properly presented programs, and, as the review pointed out, in many important respects Football Director *is lacking. The response is slow, due to the BASIC programming, although in fairness, there is a lot more detail packed in than ever there was in* Football Manager*.*

And an argument, which may well be put up, that the reviewers in question were all unsympathetic to this type of game, avoids the point that had they considered the program to be much better than they did, it would have received a far higher rating, EVEN IF this still didn't satisfy your view! Oh, and we DID get the price correct, although you can also buy it direct from D & H Games for £7.50
LM

BOXING CLEVERLY

Dear Lloyd
Having read CRASH since Issue 15, I've witnessed many changes in the reviews. Amongst them are the additions of the reviewers' names and marks, and the use of full-colour throughout the reviews. The introduction of a **Presentation** rating was long overdue as was the withdrawal of **Use of computer** and **Getting started**.

However the removal of the subheadings **Keyboard control**, **Skill levels** etc, leaves the comments box looking very obscure.

ZZAP! 64's comments section is brilliant since they explain why a game got 95% for graphics or 12% for lastability for example. Why can't (or doesn't) CRASH do the same. I have written my own example.

Zynaps – Hewson **£7.95**
Keys (definable)/Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Presentation 90%
Attractive title screen, 2-player, pause, quit and redefinable keys options
Graphics 93%
Fantastic detail, smooth scrolling and super use of colour
Sound 90%
Great tune, range of atmospheric effects
Playability 92%
Easy to use control method and icons make for instant fun
Addictive Qualities 91%
12 fast and furious levels of arcade action, enough to keep even Ben Stone going for months
Overall 91%
A classic shoot-'em-up, knocks Nemesis for six

This still incorporates all the comments box features and makes the ratings stand out more as well as making them more informative. So come on Lloyd let's improve the comments box so it matches the high ZZAP! standard.
Ian Kerr, Northwick, Cheshire

The Frontline comments and ratings are combined in this way . . . it's really a lot to do with tradition. AMTIX! also had a system like ZZAP!, but they both came after CRASH and so could be seen as an improvement . . . I suppose, though I'm not convinced of that. I know from my duties on ZZAP! that those little comments, so easy to deal with for a great game, become a tyranny to the reviewers and have always been regarded with very mixed feelings.

Then you must consider the original aim of CRASH reviews (in the dark days when a magazine review was traditionally 50 words long and three months after the event), that the actual written criticisms, followed by the comments box, should provide all the relevant notes to explain the reasons for the ratings. This was because Roger Kean deeply wanted the criticisms rather than the ratings to suggest the value of any game.

I started by saying the reviews are a tradition, but as you say, we have altered their structure from time to time, and it may be that this still isn't perfect, but I feel strongly that to add further weight to the ratings by providing comments explaining them is really only doubling up, and runs the risk of undoing CRASH's original stance. What do other readers think?
LM

THREATENED PROTECTION

Dear Lloyd
Through all the years I've been a CRASH reader, people have never stopped sending you letters slagging off our Oli. Well I'm really sick of it, so a short time ago, in the hours of darkness, hidden away from the eyes of the law, a secret organisation was formed, called the, **Oliver Frey Protection Society**.

If we see anyone in any way saying the slightest niggle of a complaint about our Oli, then our members who live in the victim's district go on a little visit to the unlucky persón for a weeny chat!

This should soon bring an end to the problem. Enclosed with this letter is your very own membership card. You can start a branch of the club in Ludlow. Remember readers, we're out there watching you . . .

Watch this space for the Oliver Frey Fan Club coming soon.
Da Boss Man, Littledale, Sheffield

I'm already a fan; and here in Ludlow, if you're not a card-carrying club member, they can haul you up before the Un-Newsfield Activities Commission. That's bad.
LM

TAI-PANNED

Dear Lloyd
I buy your mag for the previews and reviews, because I like to know what is coming on to the market, and if I'm to buy a game I find it very useful to know basically what I'm going to get for my cash. Also, I appreciate knowing that if a game has been REviewed rather than PREviewed, I can go out and buy it without a six-month delay waiting for the game to be written



to match the advertising.

Therefore, having seen the preview of *Tai-Pan* (and all the reviews in other magazines) I thought could this be another *Elite*, the game to end all games – again? When can I buy this wondrous advance in computer software technology? Why, when CRASH gives it a review. This happened in August and off I went in search of my new alter ego. I looked in Swindon, Bath, Exeter, Birmingham, Barnstable, Reading, and even went to Basingstoke (and to actually go there I must have been desperate), but no *Tai-Pan*. I was starting to think that maybe it only existed in Ludlow, but no-one knows where that is, so I couldn't find out.

So what do you think you are doing? Why join the ranks of other magazines by reviewing nonexistent games?? How do I end this letter without becoming offensive? How do I say that if you do this again I *shall* find Ludlow and come and stick your magazine up your nostril? Why so many questions? I don't know, so I'll just say;

Yours sincerely, (or am I)
Kevin Whittle, Aldbourne, Wilts

Well now and again, Kevin, we do review games in CRASH which still don't appear for sale till after the magazine has gone on sale. Firebird's Gyron*, one I can recall, was reviewed some three months before it appeared (though I think we did say it would be a while). That was, and often is, because we get a reviewable copy and we think our job is to inform you as soon as we can. Then of course, there are those instance, like* Tai-Pan *where, with the best of intentions, the software house has problems.* Tai-Pan *ran into unforeseen programming compression difficulties, especially for the 48K Spectrum. Compared to other magazines, we did look a bit late in reviewing it, though the very first finished 128 version arrived only days before going to press, so arguably CRASH was the first with a finished copy review. It was then two weeks after CRASH came out before* Tai-Pan*'s on sale date happened.*

Sorry if you feel we let you down, but Ludlow's ever so hard to find . . .
LM

THE TOP 480K

Dear Lloyd,
You wanted more computer deejay's with charts to write in, so here I am with my Top 10 on a 48K.

1 Quazatron
2 Stainless Steel
3 Ping Pong
4 Ghost Hunters
5 Zynaps
6 Uridium
7 Ranarama
8 Mikie
9 Starquake
10 Firebird

On a different note, CRASH is now an all colour mag. great, so why were there a good half dozen screen shots in MONO? This carelessness totally ruined the look of *Xecutor*.

Apart from that, CRASH has improved tenfold since I started to buy it. All the extra features . . . it's just unbelievable. The arcade reviews are especially good (even if you are a little late with some of them. I spend a pretty penny on *R-Type* and *Double Dragon* in early July).

I must also congratulate Newsfield on the release of their new baby – THE GAMES MACHINE. It is absolutely brilliant! It was amazing how many features were crammed into so few pages (132 pages – few?)

May you have a long and prosperous future.
Richard Davy, Silsden, W Yorkshire

Sometimes you can't win! The monochrome screen shots of Xecutor, Sun Star, *and* Solomon's Key *happened for the simple reason that the games arrived too late to be in colour. Would you rather we had left them out till the following month? You see, about four days before CRASH goes to press is the last possible moment anything can be in full colour, after that it's black-and-white or nothing. Thanks for the other kind comment though!*
LM

DISGUSTED, HORRIFIED, APPALLED

Dear Lloyd,
I was disgusted when I picked up CRASH 44 and saw the front cover. How dare you print such rubbish with the full knowledge that 20-year-olds read this mag. Don't you realize what the sight of a navel can do to adults of this age?

If Oli Frey is so obsessed with navels, may I suggest he joins the BBC (belly-button club) instead of inflicting this perverted trash on innocent adults.

I put up with the picture gruesomely depicting a red carnation on Fred Astaire's lapel, but now you have gone too far. I am cancelling my 30-year-old son's subscription as I feel you obviously cannot be trusted to print decent and nonpornographic pictures on the front cover of your magazine.

May I suggest in future you take more care and do not print such bloodthirsty pictures, as well as acting more responsibly towards 20-year-old youngsters.
Ben Wood (age 193 2/3), Southwell, Notts

Historically speaking, red carnations were not a bloodthirsty symbol, but more a romantic notion that the wearer was about to burst into song and dance. However, as they were usually only seen by other people in black-and-white (probably because they arrived too late to be reviewed in colour, or perhaps because they hadn't yet invented colour film stock), no-one was upset by them. Sorry we upset your tender-aged son.
LM

FAN THE ZINE FLAMES

Dear Lloyd
In recent Forums, there seems to have been a discrepancy in what *The Bug* thinks the role of fanzines is, and what almost everyone else thinks. As the editor of a truly unbiased fanzine, *Reflex*, I think I should put forward my opinions on the matter.

Contrary to what Jeffrey Davy believes, fanzines are not, never were and never will be the biggest force in the software industry. However, the rising number of fanzines seems to suggest that a large market is out there for them. If I may draw a comparison, I see fanzines as equivalent to budget software: generally poorer quality but selling in sufficient quantities for the software industry to sit up and listen. As stated by Barnaby Page in the article, The Budget Boom (CRASH 45), ' . . . and when you're blowing a £10 note anyway, you don't miss another couple of quid'.

The same is true for fanzines. If you spend £1.25 on CRASH, you won't bother about another 30p for an eye-catching, straight-to-the-point fanzine. Mastertronic don't whinge and moan about companies like Players, Code Masters and The Power House coming onto the market and stealing some of their revenue, when they're all budget houses. So why do *The Bug* get upset when more fanzines get published? What are they afraid of . . . ?

What is attractive about fanzines is that their views are generally fresh, sometimes controversial and they give their readers what they want – 100% computer entertainment from people of around their own age.

The above reasons would appear to be the very reasons why I feel *The Bug* has failed. They see themselves on an equal footing with CRASH, *Your Sinclair*, *Sinclair User* etc, and it leads to their 'editorial team' writing stale and arrogant dogma in their magazine. It can also blind them to the reality of writing a fanzine and lead to silly fantasies which are surely above 16-year-old boys (eight telephone lines indeed!)?

The Bug's views are at least laughable, at most dangerous. What place has 'loony left' propaganda in magazines about computer games? *The Bug* is bought by readers presumably because of its discerning reviews, not because people want to find out what the lads have to say about the latest 'sexist, racist or heterosexist' games (I don't think I care to find out what qualifies as 'heterosexist').

I find *The Bug*'s attitude to be one of rank hypocrisy, which is borne out by Jeffrey Davy's remarks on *Your Sinclair*'s Fanzine Of The Year awards. Although he found the competition distasteful and unfair, it did not stop him entering *The Bug* and accepting a £50 prize! I'm sure this £50 could have gone to a more gracious (and probably more deserving) fanzine.

If CRASH readers are sick of hearing about *The Bug* and their political editors (and I don't blame them!) then they should contact *Reflex* – a totally unpolitical games fanzine – at ***21 Berry Drive, Irvine, Ayrshire, KA12 0LJ***, with 30p for the latest issue. I would also highly recommend *EPROM* from **Tony Worrall, *328 The Maltings, Penworthan, Preston, Lancashire PR1 9FD***. Both of the above are unashamedly dedicated to Spectrum games, not the Labour Party.
Phil Graham, Glasgow, G43 2BY

I can see some point in your comparison between fanzines and mags like ours (or those others you mentioned that I'm not allowed to) and budget and full-price software, although it fails in the sense that newsagents don't actually sell fanzines on the counter alongside their regularly distributed magazines. Roger Kean told me he met Jeffrey Davy on the first day of The PCW Show at the opening press conference ▶


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(where, incidentally, the revered and much-bracketed one made a speech of some sort), and he told Roger he was pleased, at least, with the recent publicity they had received in CRASH.

On page 150 of this issue, there's another Fanzine File for you to peruse, but in the meantime, does ANYONE have anything good to say about The Bug *– surely someone must! And I don't mean you Jeffrey, either!*
LM

CRASH NO HUMOUR SHOCK

Dear Lloyd
A few points:
1. The CRASH Sampler was great. The loading screens from *Mean Streak* and *Athena* were fab, the graphics from *Driller* were brilliant and the music from *Trantor* was amazing. I for one will definitely buy *Trantor*, *Driller* and *Ikari Warriors* as soon as they come out.
2. In the October issue you printed a letter from John Hay, who said CRASH was boring, with no sparkle or humour. CRASH is the most exciting and original computer mag in the country. Things like 3-D pages, free demos, CRASH History, great competitions, video reviews and more pages than any other mag prove my point.

CRASH sparkles from cover to cover and has just the right level of humour in it. Humour in other mags such as *Your Sinclair* and *Sinclair User* is far too childish, they have nothing serious in them at all.

I first bought CRASH Issue 10 and I didn't even have a Spectrum! I owned a Vic 20, and didn't realise CRASH was a Spectrum-only magazine. After reading it I parted company with my Vic and bought a Speccy! I've been reading CRASH ever since, and it's improved with every issue. All in all, CRASH is the real thing.

Now that we must pay an extra 25p surely we deserve to see a photo of your good self?
Norm Burns, Belfast 14

No you don't, the 25p's got nothing to do with it! Besides (and here comes the truth, at long last), for so long I existed in CRASH without a photo – as did Roger Kean for that matter – that it became a sort of lucky charm not to appear. Now it's what some people would call a phobia.

I don't think CRASH has lost any of its humour and certainly none of its sparkle. Okay, it has lost some of those amusing little speeling errers we used to have (because Barnaby can spell and Roger used to have what he called a creative freedom from the conventional restraints of language), but have you noticed how some of those other mags you mention (but which I'm not allowed to) have adopted the funny little ways CRASH used to have with spelling and grammar?
LM

A SPARKLESS INDUSTRY

Dear Lloyd
I've never written to a magazine before, but felt I had to after reading John Hay's letter in the October issue.

I felt his comments were correct, if somewhat misdirected. Before I get lynched, let me explain!

He says that CRASH is boring, lost its sparkle, etc. What he should have said was that the computer industry in general is boring and lacks excitement.

I started learning about computers in 1982. In those days, a 5K Vic-20 cost me £200. Then, along came a new breed of computers – smaller, larger memories and better graphics. Then, hardly a week went by without some innovative new computer or peripheral appearing. New computer companies sprang up overnight, seeking livings from their garden sheds.

That was what kept the industry alive and buzzing with excitement – new and interesting computers, peripherals and innovative software – didn't you sit, mouth open, stunned, after playing *The Hobbit* for the first time? I know I did!

Nowadays, there are no new computers – the only 'new' machines are really old ones with a few extra bits bolted on; the Spectrum +2/+3 are to all intents and purposes Spectrum 48s with a few extra chips and data storage. Likewise the Commodore 128 has very little new over the C64.

We don't even have the prospect of new and innovative software to look forward to. Well over 99% of all new releases are arcade machine conversions, or poor-quality licensed games.

Original games are few and far between, unfortunately. What's needed is a change. If the hardware has been pushed to its limits, then maybe it's time for some totally new hardware.

If this can't be done, at a price the man in the street can afford, then I seriously fear for the future of the computer industry.

As for CRASH being boring, all I can say is, 'Rubbish!'

I have bought CRASH from issue one, and have found that it has matured considerably over the years. It has adapted well – giving people exactly what they want – done largely by the annual CRASHtionnaire.

If my letter has a vaguely nostalgic air, I can assure you, I am a very enthusiastic 19-year-old at the end of October (and extremely spritely for my age!)
John Parlata, Allenton, Derby

I can always lend you my walking frame, John, when it all gets too much. I think you're being a bit hard, though, on this poor, bruised industry. Over 99% for arcade/licences is a touch exaggerated, and sometimes they're very good too. It is true that hardware development has slowed of late, but on the other hand, you can't really have a healthy peripherals and software market if the machines are changing every year. It was the very stability of Spectrum and CBM 64 sales for three or more years that has led to the quantity of software we enjoy. And there is a choice of other machines now, if you want to spend the money. Acorn's Archimedes (boring name) is a bit beyond my means (and most people's I suspect), but it's a great machine – 'course, there's only one game for it (written in BASIC too), so for a bit yet, I'd stick to the Spectrum and practise with that walking frame!
LM

A PAIN IN THE EYE

Dear Lloyd
I was interested to read Maria Lyne's letter in the October Issue, asking about the eyestrain and headaches caused by using computers and VDUs. I too work with computers, though not to the extent of eight hours, maybe just two to three, but we in the Civil Service have been blessed with lots of various reports, research, bumph, and general silliness, and as a result the trade unions and management have reached 'various agreements' and made certain rules.

As a rule, staff are advised that they are only to input, etc, on VDUs for four hours a day and only one hour at a time with a 15-20 minute break away from the VDU.

Various other things have come about too, like the siting of VDUs in the office. Apparently they should not be up against walls, etc, as you have no depth of vision beyond the terminal. And, when you are inputting, look up now and then to readjust your eyes to focusing longer distances and then get back on with it!

There are also more technical things like how to sit at the terminal, a recommended distance that your eyes and arms should be from the VDU/keyboard, (this to prevent tenosynovitis, a condition where the cartilages in hands and fingers swell up and deform (or something like that!) as long time typists/computer programmers may well be painfully aware.

And so on and so forth, and although this may be very boring stuff to a lot of micro users, I suppose it's of interest to some who work with them all day every day. It's also interesting to note that some doctors advise that pregnant women should not use VDUs.

But as you stated in your reply to Maria, there's a lot of controversy about this, and when 'experts' disagree with 'experts', well, things start to get rather boringly confusing!
Andy White, Cwmbran, Gwent

If this keeps up, we'll have everyone in CRASH Towers getting up for 15 minutes every hour, and only working half days! The notion of not siting a computer screen up against a wall is quite sensible, I would say (although the one I use is), or at least near a window you can look out of, but in truth, anyone whose work forces them to work closely to it, should expand their vision frequently, otherwise the eyes do grow tired, and you feel dizzy when you stand up and have to refocus.

I wonder whether the increase in reading (after all, before the turn of the century hardly anyone read anything) has led to worse eyesight in general? I suspect not significantly. But more people wear glasses now, you might say. True, but again, before the turn of the century, who could afford glasses? And how many opticians were there to provide them in the first place? Perhaps one day the much-publicised horrors of the VDU will also become nothing more than an interesting historical footnote.
LM

FANZINE FLOORED

Dear Lloyd
I'm writing to you in defence of T Worrall's letter about fanzines.

My name is Phil Palmer. I am 16 years old. One of my friends and I decided to write a Spectrum fanzine for local enthusiasts.

We spent ages planning and ▶



typesetting articles for the magazine. Eventually we had an original.

The magazine was called *Z80*. We had thought of ways of increasing a circulation, so we sent a copy to *Your Sinclair* and also to CRASH.

It just happened that CRASH was running a Fanzine roundup or so we thought.

When CRASH appeared in our local newsagents I bought a copy. I turned to the Fanzine page where I didn't find a roundup, more a slag-up of the Fanzines that people had spend so much time to write.

Thanks to your magazine we lost a lot (well for us anyway), about £10, and our old circulation. Nobody bought even the first issue because you stated that if a fanzine had only just started then it probably wouldn't be worth the money.

Before that month's CRASH had been released, we had a circulation of about 30 people. Not much, but a damn sight better than none at all.

We also had spent money photocopying the 20 pages of the magazine and then still tried to make a slight profit for the mag to be released at only 30p.

Thanks CRASH. You've been a great help . . .
Phil Palmer, Claremont

You seem to ascribe a great power to CRASH and its Fanzine File articles. I'm sure they must have some effect on readers, but people aren't fools, and they make up their own minds as to what they wish to buy and read. I find it hard to believe that 30 individuals would all, at the same moment, decide not to buy your fanzine because of something they may have read in CRASH.

Besides which, Fanzine File isn't there just to praise and promote all fanzines. It's constructive criticism. The warning given – perfectly clearly, I think – was not that first issues are bad, it was that people shouldn't subscribe to a fanzine when it's new because many do cease publication quite soon. We have to protect the fanzines' readers' interests as well as their editors'.
LM

MORE CHARTS

Dear Lloyd
You wanna top ten music, you gotta top ten music. Well, sort of. I've divided it into 2 top 5 charts, one for 48 and one for 128.

Speccy 48K
1 *Agent X* (doop ba bop!)
2 *Nodes Of Yesod*
3 *Gyroscope* (when you win)
4 *Trap Door* (don't you open that trap door!)
5 *Sweevo's World* (why not?)

Speccy 128
1 *Never Ending Story*
2 *Starglider*
3 *Glider Rider* (hate the game!)
4 *Daley Thompson's Supertest*
5 *Stormbringer*

If you think your Hermes is bad then you should see the effort I'm typing this on. Olivetti 1776 or summut!
Super Sid, (alias Andy Haslam), Walsall, West Midlands

Who says I think my Hermes is bad?
LM

THE ETON HACKING SONG

To the super cool person who wears a sack over his head. Or in other words,
Dear Lloyd
I just had to write, (well not strictly true), about the playing tips in your mag. They're brill. However I feel that the hackers are taken for granted. So, with no expense spared, I have composed the Hacking Song to show that we appreciate the hard work they do for all the mortals who can't be bothered to learn to hack – such as me!

'Oh sugar!' I moan,
'I've been blown to bits'.
With these wacky new games,
You really need your wits
Out of time in *Enduro*,
Kicked where it hurts in Fist,
And my AGAV in *Starglider*,
Received too many hits!

So I pray for the guys,
Who really know their stuff.
Who make Stallone in *Cobra*,
That extra bit tough.
Whether it's immortality or timelessness,
Which you seek and you need,
They'll certainly make your Willy, (as in *Jet Set*),
Anything but a weed.

To me they are heroes,
I'm sure you'll agree.
Jon North is a wiz,
So too the Hackers from Haxby.
And all the other hackers,
Too many to name.
Who beat that old programmer,
At his own game.

No speed lock's a match,
Although flashy and quick.
It may take them a while,
But soon they can lick.
Every complex system,
Ever dreamt up to load,
That garbage of waffle,
They call machine code.

Why do they do it?
It can't be for free.
Or are they the worst,
A games player can be?
But I do know without them,
Lives would be lost,
In those toughie new games,
Some not cheap at the cost!

Its a rough old world,
In which to be alive,
But at least with our heroes
We'll continue to survive!

To conclude, how about letting us see a mug shot of the hacking bunch, after all they must be about as clever as the actual programmers themselves.
Martin Harrison, Kendal, Cumbria

Hackers from Hax,
Send us a fax,
Include your pix,
That we may fix
Upon you six . . .
Or are there five of you . . . ?
(Thank you Martin).
LM

PROBLEMS WITH THE SAMPLER

Dear Lloyd
When I received the CRASH Sampler tape (October cover mount), I thought great idea. When I loaded it, I wasn't so sure. Surely how the game plays, the addictiveness and playability is important. On *Mean Streak*, *Driller*, *Trantor* and *Sláine*, how do you test these features as all you see is the computer controlling the action?

My biggest quibble is over *Sláine*, it shows virtually nothing, except words flashing across the screen, and some fairly impressive pictures. What is the use of viewing a new system if you can't understand what is happening? It would not have been too difficult to allow you to move around in the game a little, would it not? And it would have given the reader more of an insight upon the game.

Of the games which you can actually control, I found both Ikari Warriors and Athena good, and I'm thinking of purchasing both. I'm sure that if the player had more control of the character in the other demos, they might be more impressed, leading to more sales.

On a different tack, I would like to express my views upon the poster I received in my copy of CRASH, that is the one from the Power House. I could stand the other drawings in CRASH, even *Barbarian* etc, but this poster is totally over the top. It is truly disgusting. As soon as my mother saw it, she tore it up, such was her disgust. Please, no more posters (or drawings) like that, thank you!
Michael J Brown, Ossett, W Yorks

We had hoped all the demos would be playable, and no doubt so did the responsible software houses. However, there's many a slip twixt cup and lip, and several (after all, the tape was mastered long before the issue was finished) were unable to supply playable demos of the games intended for the Sampler. But I absolutely agree with your sentiments.

The poster: I agree with you as well! The poster (for those who are not subscribers – we sometimes let software houses include posters with subscribers' copies) was for the game Soft And Cuddly *from the Power House. I suggest you read Mel Croucher's piece on violence in computer games in the next issue of THE GAMES MACHINE, on sale from 19 November, which has quite a bit to say about both the game and the poster.*
LM



▶ **Karl Cowdale caught in a rare moment of relaxation**

Thank you to everyone who wrote to the CRASH Forum this month, especially the many kind letters regarding Newsfield's new publication, THE GAMES MACHINE. Sorry I couldn't fit you all in, but keep trying! But thanks also to Karl Cowdale whose arm muscles have become enormous over the past two years from hauling all those mail sacks up from the post office and sorting out the letters for me. If you have anything you want to commit to paper, send your missives to LLOYD MANGRAM, CRASH FORUM, *PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB*, and Karl will make sure I get it safely!

Nick Roberts'

PLAYING TIPS



Hi there ladies, gentlemen and tipsters and welcome to a brand spanking new Playing Tips – with a difference. We've had to accommodate another pigeon hole up in the mailroom because you've just been too generous with your POKEs, and Lloyd's thrust me into the hot seat without so much as a letter opener!

(Lloyd's doing so much on the CRASH History and the Christmas Special issue – Lookbacks and so on – that there's just not time for him to manage the Playing Tips and Preview for the next few months. Mind you, he still drops into my corner every so often with the odd word of avuncular (LMLWD) advice . . .)

At last we have the final part of the *Stormbringer* solution and POKEs for *Motos* and *Ball Crazy* – AND a fantastic map of Hewson's *Exolon* with a few tips thrown in! I'll announce who gets this months £30 of software at the end (yes, the prize has been increased to match Tech Tips, as well it should be), so you'll have to read all the tips to get there!

STORMBRINGER – THE SOLUTION CONTINUES

'At last,' I hear you all cry, 'they've remembered to print the second part of the *Stormbringer* solution!' Well, the truth is we'd forgotten all about it till some mystery person wrote an ear-tweaking letter to remind us. This continuation has come from Lee Westwood and Ben Pugh of Chesterfield, so here goes . . .

After changing the Bearwolf back into a teddy bear, go left off the screen into the caves. There are five rooms. You must jump the gaps carefully when you get to the final room. Get to the left side of the screen and drop the advert under the missile. Jump onto the advert and pick up the missile. Then drop off the advert and pick it up.

Walk all the way to the castle, picking up the teleport pad and the key. Once inside the castle, walk along to the right till you come to a room with a lever in it. Pull the lever and carry on walking to the right till you get to the last screen on that level. Pick up the glow shield and jump on the blue pad and keep jumping.

Then go as far left as possible and pull the lever again. Drop down the hole in the floor, walk right past the twins and into the one-way corridor and pull the lever. Go to the end screen and drop down the hole. You should land on a stool.

Now jump up one level and pull all the levers. When you come to a room with a rat in it throw the teleport pad at him and teleport. Now carry on walking and pulling levers as you go. Drop an egg down the well to have a wish.

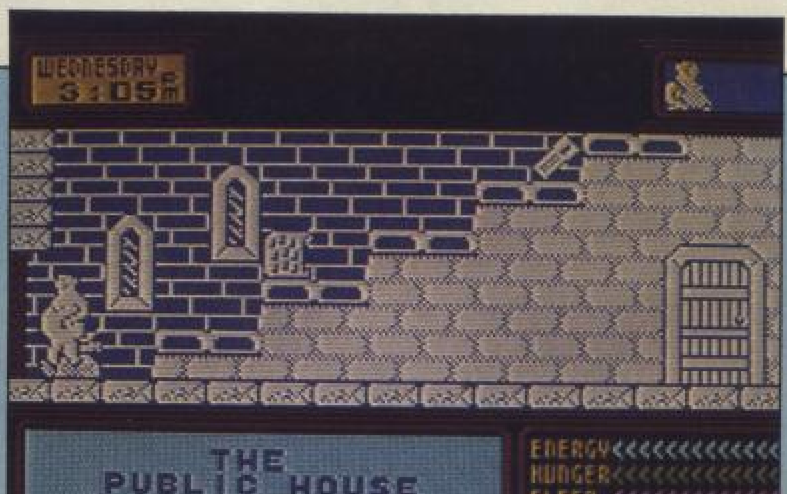
HOWDON HACKERS DUO

Those intrepid *Howdon Hackers* have been using up all their envelopes again sending in POKEs. This month, their two best hacking routines are for *Streaker* and *Motos*.

MOTOS

Here's an infinite-everything POKE routine that will boost the addictive qualities of *Motos* to kingdom come. Just type in the listing and press that little old PLAY button (with the *Motos* tape in, of course). And look out for the *Motos* Editor later on in Playing Tips . . .

```
10 REM (C) HOWDON HACKERS 1987
20 LET A=36:LET B=70422
30 FOR F=32000 TO 32000+35
40 READ C
50 POKE F,C
60 LET B=B-(A*C)
70 LET A=A-1
80 NEXT F
90 IF B<>0 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN
     DATA":STOP
100 CLEAR 31999
110 LOAD "" SCREEN$:PRINT AT 0,0;
120 LOAD "" CODE
130 RANDOMIZE USR 32011
140 DATA 62,9,50,238,163,50,239,
     163,175,195,16,130,33,9,130,54,195,
     35,54,0,35,54,125,175,
     50,233,165,50,222,165,50,1,165,205,0,12
     8
```



STREAKER

Carlin the diplomat is still running around clad only in his birthday suit, so those Howdon Hackers felt sorry for him and gave him a good old POKE here and there to cheer him up. Here is the POKE for infinite lives . . .

```
10 REM STREAKER
20 REM HOWDON HACKERS '87
30 CLEAR 24999
40 LOAD "" SCREEN$
50 LOAD "" CODE
60 POKE 50218,0
70 RANDOMIZE USR 56000
```

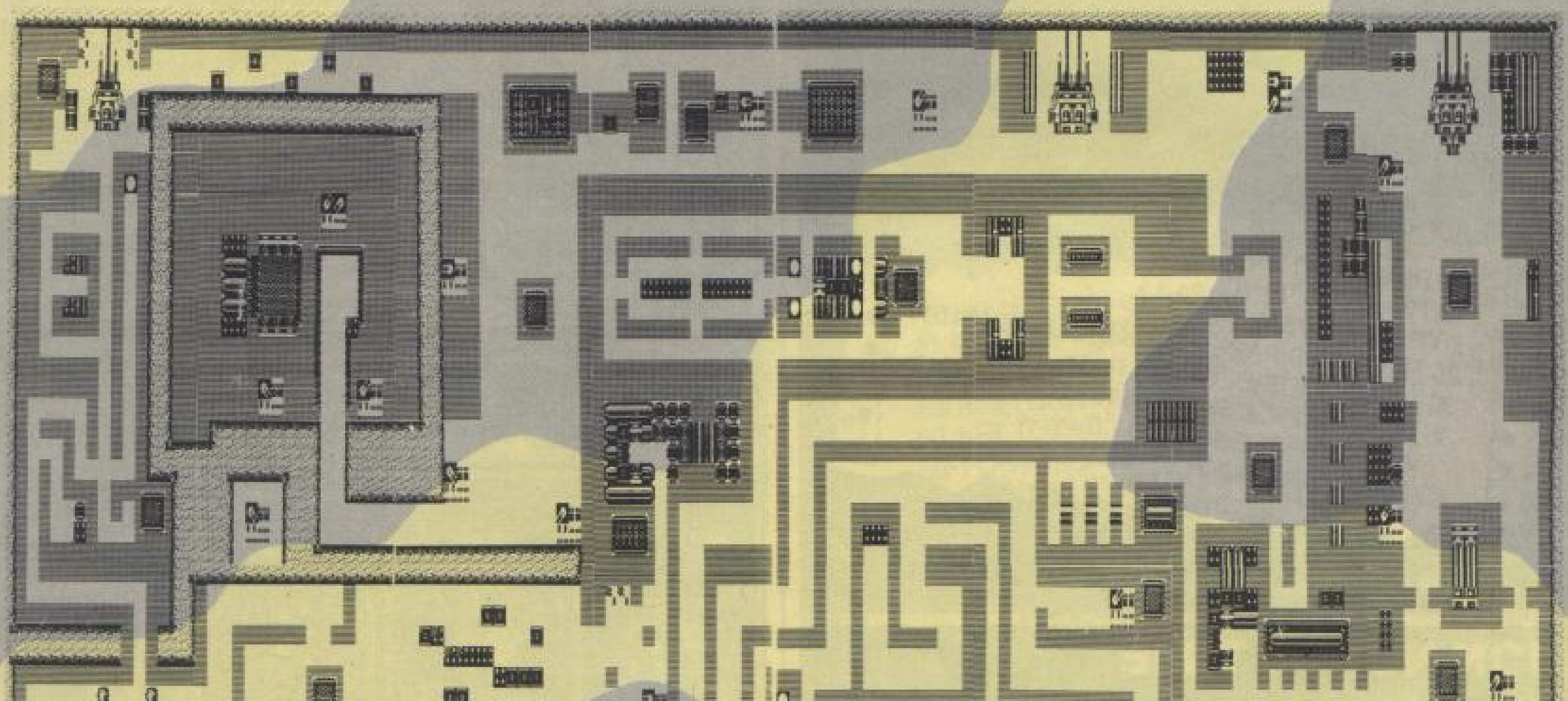
NONTERRAQUEOUS

Now I know from experience that this one is really frustrating. As soon as you think you're getting somewhere your psyche goes down and the game returns to the title screen. But now Jamie Gosse **from Southampton has come to the rescue with this cheat.**

When your psyche is low just go to the right of any vertical shaft and keep pressing to the right while going up off the screen and then back down into the last screen. Your psyche will go up by five each time you change screen. But beware: if your psyche goes over 800 you will die instantly.

PANZADROME

Richard Burnett **of Swanland, North Ferriby has been slaving away at a hot computer making a brilliant map of** Ariolasoft's Panzadrome **. . .**



AMAUROTE

Anybody having trouble killing the queen in M.A.D.'s Amaurote**? Well, trouble no more –** Chris Moore **from Billinge has come up with the solution to end your pains:**

Radio base and get a Supa-bomb. Now take the bomb into the bottom right-hand corner of the district and destroy the corner of the fencing. The queen will now be dead.

And some extra tips:

1 Try to get the drones to follow your Arachnus. This makes the drones easier to hit.
2 Run right in front of the drones to make them follow you.
3 Get your Arachnus repaired when your damage is at about 85-90%.
4 Don't fire bombs constantly or your city damage will rise.
5 Start with one of the harder districts.
6 Only radio for rescue when you are hemmed in by the drones.
7 Try to explore the district before you start mopping up the drones. This will help you when you are being chased.
8 If you see a scout make sure you destroy it. If you don't, the scout informs the queen and she sends out more drones.

ELITE 128

Daniel Hunt says: when you die say 'yes' to the exit when it has finished. Now when you start a new game you will carry on in the nearest space station to where you left off.

NIGHTMARE RALLY

Brett (who didn't give his last name) says: press SYMBOL SHIFT and Q simultaneously when the game starts. The speedometer will go up to full throttle.

INTO THE EAGLE'S NEST

Brett (who still hasn't given his last name) says you should add these to the high-score table: DAS MAP for map mode, DAS CHT for infinite lives, DAS NME wipes out enemy, MAP OFF deletes map mode.

COBRA

Brett (etc) says: press M and N and then SPACE. The game will slow down. (But this only works if there's a joystick connected.)

LIGHTFARCE

What . . . ? You know, in Issue 39 (April) there was a little extra for 128K owners of *Zub*: when you're playing it press 2,4,6,8 to cheat and then press 1,3,5,7 to get into the game *Lightfarce*.

Well, now 48K owners can play *Lightfarce* as well, because Darrell King of Hull has come up with this routine that allows *Lightfarce* to run alone on a 48K machine and gives you infinite energy. Just type in the short routine and play the *Zub* tape from the start.

```
10 REM LIGHTFARCE (48K)
15 REM BY D. KING
20 REM 20/6/87
25 BORDER 0:PAPER 0:INK 0:CLEAR 49151
30 LOAD "MUSIC"CODE
35 POKE 58195,0:POKE 58199,0:POKE
   58200,0:POKE 58201,0
40 RANDOMIZE USR 53152
```

If you don't want to have infinite energy just delete line 35.

JON NORTH TIME

Tra, la, la . . . Hello, children, it's Jon North time again. ('Yippee!') This month Jon goes back to school to learn his maths formulae, and gets perplexed by *Plexar*, all of which makes him very *Dizzy* . . .

πr^2

The baked-bean-like thingy in Mindgames's πr^2 needs a little POKE to make him do his maths right, so just MERGE the BASIC loader and type the following lines before the RANDOMIZE USR statement.

POKE 38752,0 (infinite lives)
POKE 38481,0 (infinite energy)

PLEXAR

Some people are finding the crystal roads of *Plexar* hard driving, so the Jon North AA service turns up with this routine:

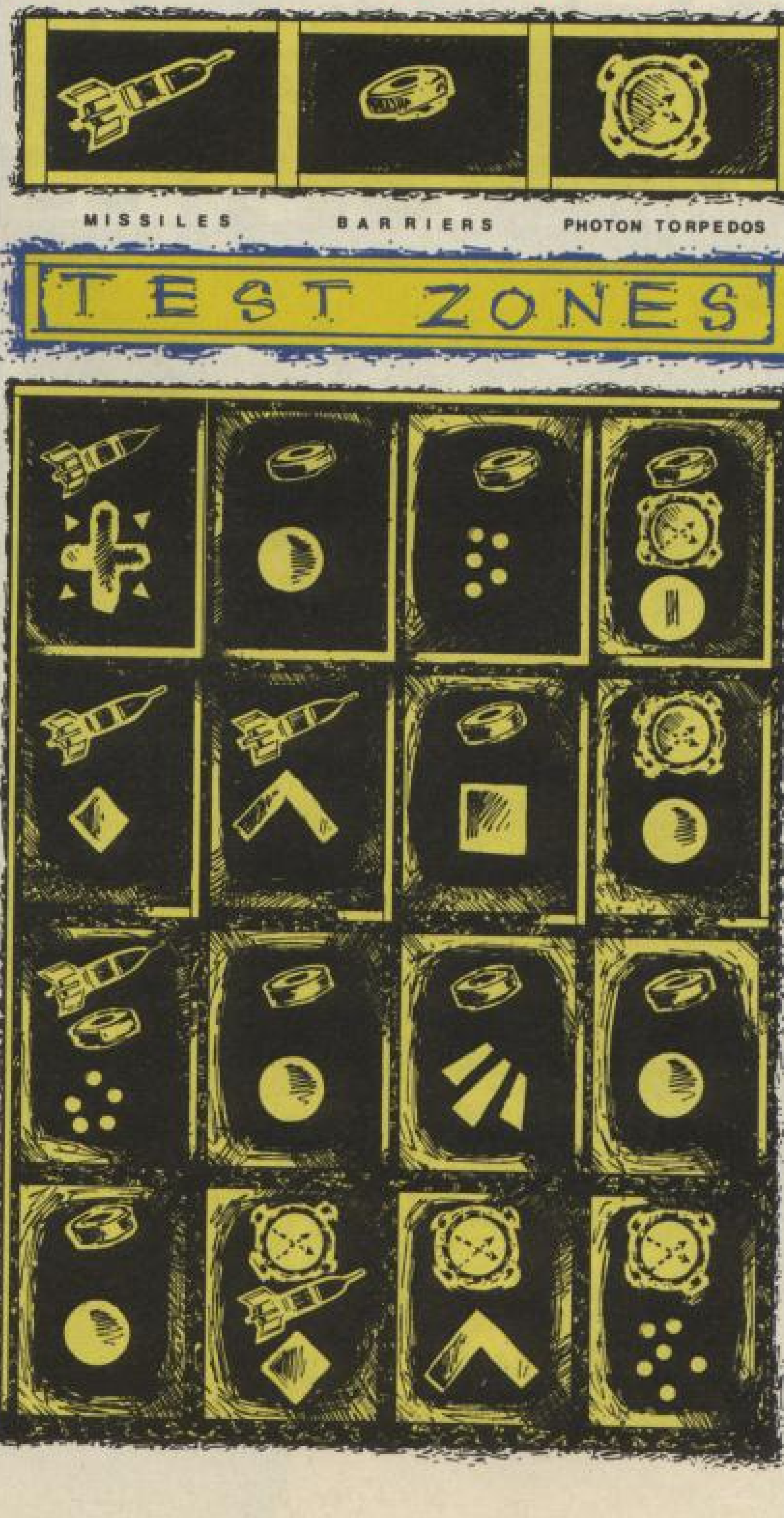
```
10 REM PLEXAR POKES BY JON NORTH
20 LOAD "" CODE:POKE 37331,91
30  FOR F=23432 TO 23438
40 READ A:POKE F,A:NEXT F
50 RANDOMIZE USR 37263
60 DATA 175,50,138,186,195
70 DATA 136,144
```

JON'S *DIZZY* POKES

```
10 REM DIZZY BY JON NORTH
20 LET imm=0:LET liv=0
30 INPUT "IMMORTAL? ";LINE A$
40 IF A$="y" THEN LET imm=211
50 INPUT "LIVES? "; LINE A$
60 IF A$="y" THEN LET liv=245
70 LOAD "" CODE
80 FOR F=23352 TO 23361
90 READ A:POKE F,A:NEXT F
100 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
110 DATA 175,50,200,imm,50
120 DATA 25,liv,195,182,92
```

Richard Peake of Preston has sent in a highly colourful tip for Ocean's *Mutants*. On this zone map he has written which weapons to use on which levels, which is vital to completing the game.

M U T A N T S



SURVIVING *DEATH WISH 3*

It seems that 70% of the tipsters who write to me come from Surrey. Perhaps it's the air down there, or the water? Whatever it is, it didn't stop Wayne Walker **sending in these tips for Gremlin Graphics's** Death Wish 3.

1. The first thing to do is to get your ammunition built up to full. When you start your weapons are only half-full. The shotgun takes a maximum of 20 shots, the machine gun takes 85, the rocket-launcher 30 and the Magnum 50.
2. Never take a weapon unless you are low on ammo. The extra ammo will only fill your current weapon to its maximum capacity.
3. Don't pick up a new bulletproof vest unless yours is in a bad condition. Remember where the vests are, because they're scarce.
4. When on the street the thugs walk faster than the grannies, so don't shoot till the thug is nearer to you than the granny is. You lose lots of points if you shoot grannies!
5. Never shoot policemen; not only will it put your score down, but all the policemen you meet after that will shoot you as well as the thugs.
6. It takes two shots to kill a gang leader; the first just breaks the table your target is sitting behind.

MOTOS EDITOR

Paul Wells **of Sheffield has been slaving away at his Speccy to produce a fantastic editor for M.A.D.'s** Motos. **It allows you to edit the layout of each screen and create your own personal copy. To get a copy of this editor, you have two options: either send a tape with an SAE or a shiny new pound coin wrapped in pretty paper and details of your address to: MOTOS EDITOR, Paul Wells, *14 Whiteways Drive, Sheffield S4 8ET*. And your editor will be escorted straight to you. *(I don't like the sound of that - Man Ed)***

A *DOWN TO EARTH* AUTHOR

Darren Byford **from Sussex has found a great cheat on Firebird's** Down To Earth **– which isn't very surprising, as he wrote it! When you are alive on a screen just hold down 5, 4, 3, and 2, and while holding them down press 1 to go on to the next screen.**

DIZZY AGAIN

Here are some tips from Al **and** Ric **of Pirton for Code Masters's** Dizzy. **They give you the items, where to find them, and what to do with them . . .**

GREASE GUN: in the room left of the first – drop next to cart in mineshaft
GRAVEYARD KEY: down the mineshaft – drop next to graveyard gateway
PLASTIC RAINCOAT: in the haunted chimney – carry it when walking into droplets and it destroys them for that game
GHOST BUSTER GUN: diamond mine – carry it and fall onto ghost in haunted chimney
MINER'S HARD HAT: room right of haunted chimney – destroys stalactites that fall down
PURSE OF GOLD: room right and down from the chimney – drop on bucket near the hermit's house
CLOUD'S SILVER LINE: obtained by jumping on top of the hermit's house – drop in pot at start
3 IN 1 OIL: in the secret caves (to get it go down shaft, down chimney, right, right, jump on the purple thing and then jump straight up and a lift will come down for you) – drop on winch next to drawbridge
BIRDSEED: in the mineshaft – carry it and it kills all birds when hit for that game
CROWBAR: open trap door under spider at bottom of cliffs
EMERALD: top of crystal cliffs – drop on gravestone with hole underneath
CLOVE OF GARLIC: down where opened by crowbar – carry to kill bats at touch throughout the game
FLAMING TORCH: room right of start – drop next to cauldron at start
SPADE: at top of tall tree – drop in the middle of the room with hollow-sounding ground
MUSHROOM TROWEL: in hole spade made – drop on mushroom on ledge in hole spade made
BOLT CUTTERS: down hole spade made – drop at pile of chains down mineshaft and left
WIG: past bolt cutters' resultant – drop in pot
DRY ICE: crystal cliffs – freeze lake past resultant of bolt cutters
PROTECTION AMULET: past frozen lake – kill the fireballs which the wizard Zaks is going to throw at you
INSECTICIDE: graveyard – kills off any spiders that touch you in the game
DUX FEATHER: next to drawbridge – drop in pot
TROLL BREW: inside castle (WARNING: do not go in the room underneath troll brew as you can't get out without dying!) – drop in pot
EMPTY BOTTLE: in the screen with haunted forest message – drop in pot
FULL BOTTLE – resultant of lighting fire under pot and putting wig, feather, silver line and brew into it – drop next to wizard Zak in castle
AND FOR EXTRA SPRING . . . just jump on top of mushrooms and move left or right.

ROAD RUNNER – LOAD IN ONE!

Some smart alec called Dave Sansom **has been calling me 'Nick the $*%!?*!' because of what I said in my Issue 43** Road Runner **comment – about how annoying it is having to load each level of the US Gold game separately. You see, Dave has found a way to get past all the reloading:**

1. When asked to LOAD 01, load in the header then . . .
2. stop the tape immediately after it changes from LOAD 01 to LOADING 01.
3. Wind on the tape to the beginning of the level you require, and miss off the header bit (you may have to take out the cassette lead to find it) but leave the rest of the leader.
4. Start the tape again and that's it. The level you chose and *all* those after it are loaded!

Dave does say 'sorry' for calling me a $*%!?*! – a good job, because we were just about to send around the CRASH mafia to sort him out.

PERPETUAL *QUARTET*

C Smith, J Bean **and** D Austin **have been busy over the last few weeks sending in enough POKEs to fill Playing Tips. This** Quartet **routine will give you infinite power on all four players, so life will be much easier. Just type in the routine and play your** Quartet **tape.**

```
10 REM C.SMITH J.BEAN D.AUSTIN
20 REM QUARTET POKES
30 CLEAR 65535
40 RESTORE
50 LET TOT=0:LET HAXPOC=1
60 FOR F=50000 TO 50155
70 READ A:LET TOT=TOT+HAXPOC*A
80 POKE F,A:LET HAXPOC=HAXPOC+1
90 NEXT F
100 IF TOT<>1591322 THEN PRINT AT
    9,9;INK 7;BORDER 2;FLASH 1;"ERROR
    IN DATA":BEEP 1,1:STOP
110 PRINT $1;AT 1,7;"START QUARTET
    TAPE"
120 RANDOMIZE USR 50000
1000 DATA 62,255,55,221,33,203,92
1010 DATA 17,234,6,205,86,5,48
1020 DATA 241,243,237,94,33,124,195
1030 DATA 229,33,193,98,229,51,51
1040 DATA 17,99,252,1,42,3,33
1050 DATA 253,94,62,202,237,79,195
1060 DATA 193,98,33,150,195,229,33
1070 DATA 135,252,229,51,51,17,145
1080 DATA 252,33,145,252,1,252,2
1090 DATA 62,140,237,79,195,135,252
1100 DATA 33,145,252,17,193,138,1
1110 DATA 92,0,237,176,33,212,138
1120 DATA 34,217,138,34,221,138,33
1130 DATA 202,138,34,229,138,33,239
1140 DATA 138,34,249,138,62,195,50
1150 DATA 13,139,33,196,195,34,14
1160 DATA 139,195,193,138,49,0,0
1170 DATA 33,219,195,17,208,255,213
1180 DATA 1,28,0,237,176,62,195
1190 DATA 50,28,255,195,247,254,62
1200 DATA 201,50,240,234,50,34,235
1210 DATA 50,84,235,50,132,235,195
1220 DATA 38,255
```

ATHENA – ROCKS AND HARD PLACES

Lovely Athena can't cope with all that rock-bashing, so Steven Aspinwall **has come to the rescue with these tips for her lovely eyes to look over.**

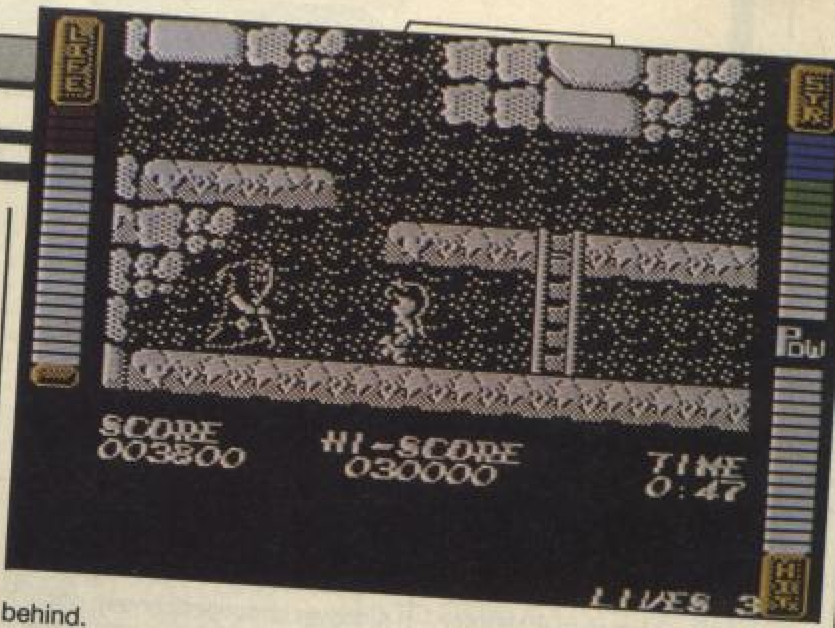
The levels are:
1 FOREST
2 CAVERN
3 SKY
4 LABYRINTH
5 SEA
6 HELL
7 THE LAST WORLD

Every now and then a **rose** will appear. Hit it with the weapon you are carrying and a heart will float quickly up the screen. Collect it and the damage that has been done to your life force will decrease by a few points.

Try to keep travelling to the **right**; that way you waste less time and have more time to look for weapons.

When you find a **yellow square** with a K in it, collect it immediately. This will ensure that when you get killed you do not lose all your weapons.

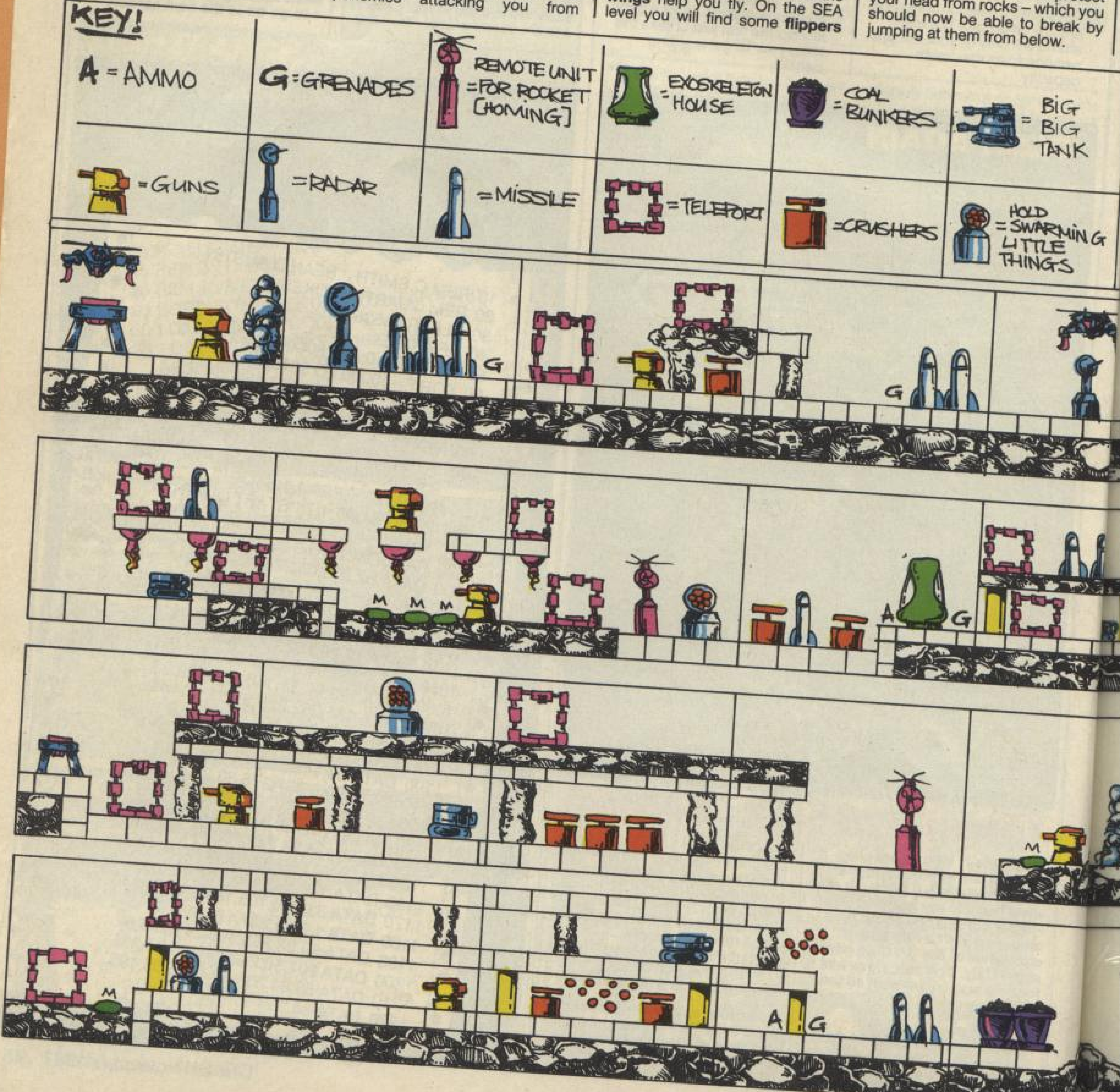
Learn to control your character properly; get used to turning Athena around so you can kill enemies attacking you from



behind.

You can collect objects that help you **jump higher** and **fly**. The **shoe** will help you jump higher and the **wings** help you fly. On the SEA level you will find some **flippers** hanging about; these also help you fly.

Finally, the **helmet** will protect your head from rocks – which you should now be able to break by jumping at them from below.



CAIRNPOKE CASCADE

BALL CRAZY

Cairnpoke, **from Country Antrim, has sent in masses of POKEs this month and here's the first. You won't have to spend ages typing it in, either, because it's only one line! Just type MERGE "" and press PLAY on the tape player. When the OK sign comes onscreen type in:**

```
37 POKE 32995,0
```

And you will have immortality . . . !

YABBA DABBA DOO

Poor old Fred Flintstone is having trouble getting a house built for Wilma and him to live in, so Cairnpoke has come to the rescue with this routine:

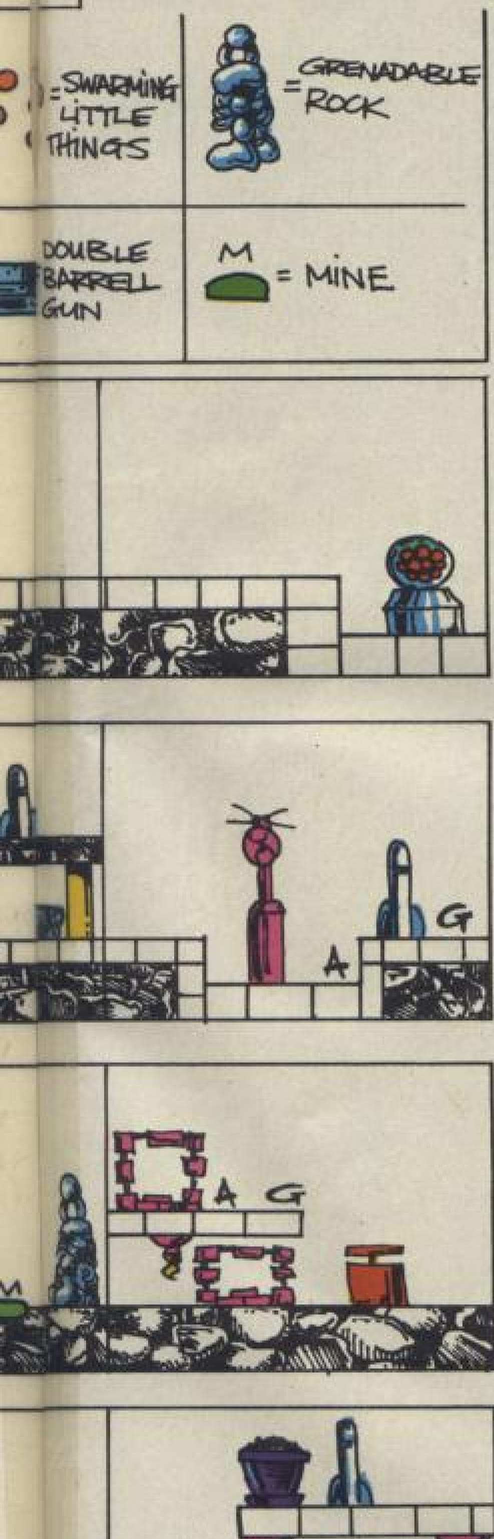
```
10 CLEAR 64765
20 FOR N=65000 TO 65007:READ A:POKE
   N,A:NEXT N
30 PRINT AT 10,4;"POKES BY CAIRNPOKE
   1987"
40 DATA 175,50,92,170,124,246,1,201:
   LOAD "" CODE
50 POKE 64909,195:POKE 64910,232:POKE
   64911,253
60 RANDOMIZE USR 64767
```

ACE

No, I'm not referring to the superb quality of this month's Playing Tips section (though that's hardly in doubt) – it's yet another POKE routine from Cairnpoke. **(This one's been lost in the files for some time, but apparently Lloyd's granny always said 'better late than never'.)**

```
10 CLEAR 26999:
20 PRINT AT 10,4;"POKES BY CAIRNPOKE
   1986": LOAD ""CODE
30 LOAD ""CODE
40 POKE 32506,0: POKE 32507,0: POKE
   32508,0: REM IMMORTAL
50 POKE 38056,24: REM INFINITE FUEL
60 RANDOMIZE USR 27000
```

EXOLON



Hewson's fantastic Exolon **has now earned itself a map as well as the POKEs and cheat mode printed last issue. The first 24 zones have been drawn by** James Mowl **and** Paul Birdseye **of Chichester, who suitably call themselves** The Mad Mappers. **They've also kindly donated some weapon descriptions to go with the map, and promise me that Level Two is on its way.**

HYPER-ALLOY EXOSKELETON
This is the main piece of equipment you can pick up in *Exolon*. With this exoframe:

a) you can walk through mines.
b) you are shielded from some but not all aliens.
c) you no longer have to bend down or stand up to shoot the missiles from the double-barrelled missile-launcher.

BACKPACK GRENADE-LAUNCHER
Here's the best piece of equipment in the game. With it you can:

a) blast any piece of machinery or rocks in your way.
b) blast away at the homing missiles' control tower.
c) blast away at the sealed globe that contains little pods.

HAND-HELD BLASTER
This one's quite useful for shooting things, but beware: you have only 99 shots. With the hand-held blaster you can shoot any aliens, but not machinery.

DOUBLE-BARRELLED HAND-HELD BLASTER
This comes with the Exoskeleton and is extremely useful when blasting away little aliens and shooting missiles from double-barrelled rocket-launchers. And it pulverises things much quicker than other weapons!



A TERRIBLY SORRY PLAYING TIPS ED WRITES

Well, if my eyes don't deceive me, it looks as if more mistakes were made in Jon North's infinite-lives POKE routine for Sceptre Of Bagdad **published in the Issue 40 Playing Tips Supplement (blessèd be its memory . . .). But never fear –** Kevin Russell **is here with a correction. All you have to do is** MERGE "" **and you should get an error message.** LIST **the program and** EDIT **line 60. It should read:**

```
60 POKE VAL "59858",VAL "0": RANDOMIZE USR 58002
```

RUN **it again, and everything should be hunky-dory!**

Well, I'm afraid that's it for another month – though I'll admit I'm sort of relieved too, because it's been a hard four weeks of opening, testing and typing your POKEs and tips and deciding which ones to use out of so many valuable entries! Thanks to ex-Tipsman Lloyd for his help and the hand he lent me – a little gnarled, perhaps, and the nails could do with some manicuring, but it had that gardener's *je ne sais quoi*.

£30 worth of software goes to our CRASH Cartographers Of The Month: those Mad Mappers **(James Mowl and Paul Birdseye) from Chichester for their very professional map of Hewson's** Exolon.

And what I could do with now (besides a holiday – already!) is a few POKEs and tips for Grange Hill, How To Be A Complete Bastard, Moonstrike, Meanstreak **or, indeed, absolutely any game that takes your fancy. Each month there'll be a prize of £30 worth of software for the best tip or POKE or map (maps earn their creators the coveted title of CRASH Cartographer Of The Month). So keep on sending them to the usual address (some things never change):**

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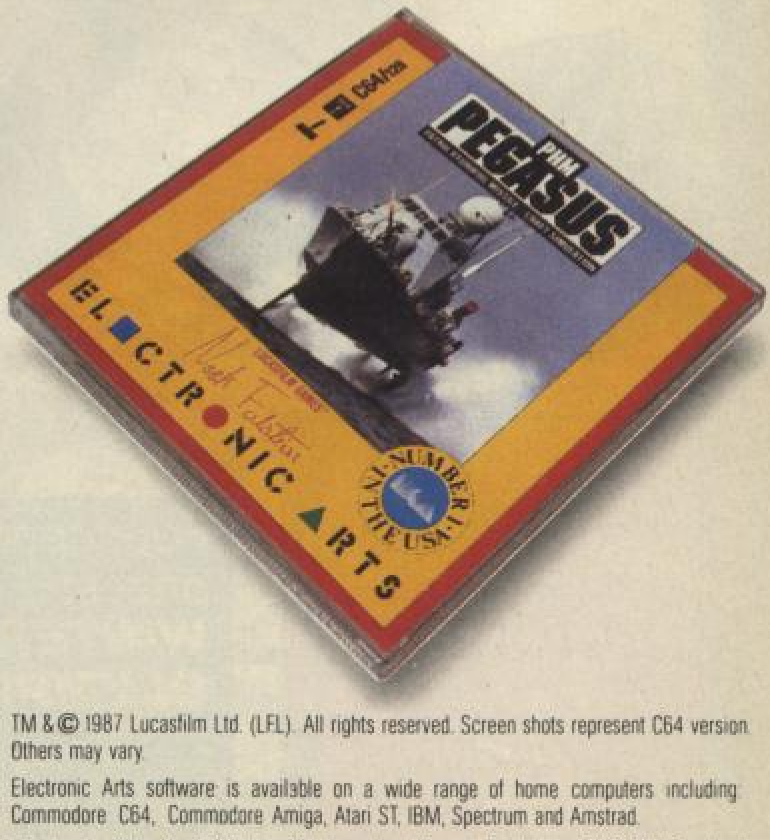
It's 7.00 in the evening. You've just finished another meal. You should do your homework but something is calling you from the garage. Something that would terrify the neighbours. Something agile, fast and deadly. **Pegasus**-the Patrol Hydrofoil Missilecraft. The temptation is just too much.



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GAME SET AND MATCH

WIN A VIDEO RECORDER!
WIN OCEAN'S VIDEO BOARD GAME - *WINTER OLYMPICS*!
WIN THE COMPLETE SPORTS COMPILATION - *GAME SET AND MATCH*!

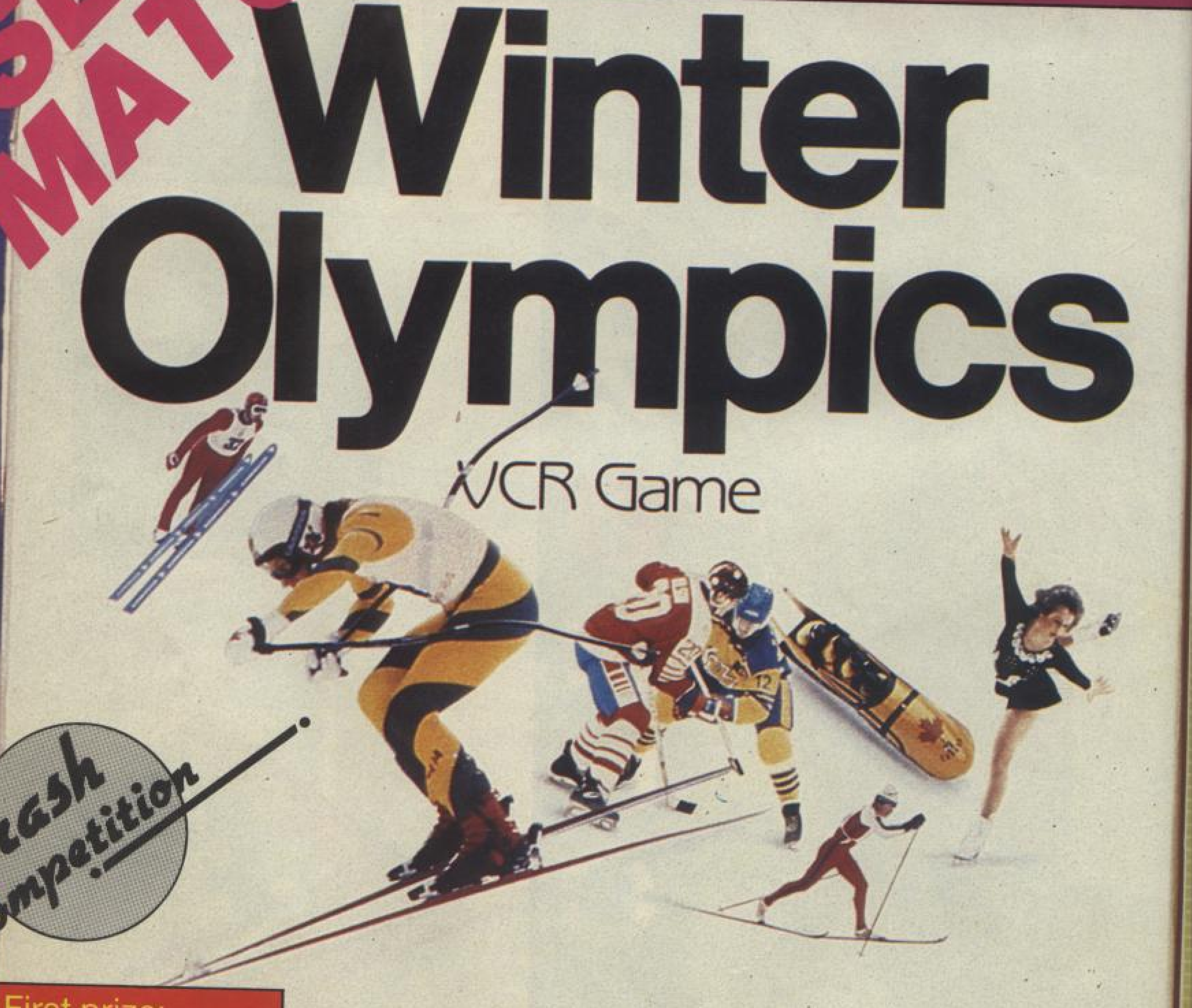
POOR OLD porky Paul Patterson, Ocean's erstwhile Sales Manager, he is having a rough time of it. Once winner of the Manchester Cup For Kipper-Stretching now has problems lifting a pint of Old Flatulence beer to his lips (though after much practice he appeared to cope well enough at the PCW show).

But suddenly, as if a miracle had occurred, one morning he burst into the Ocean offices saying 'Well, I played squash last night, followed by a quick boxing round, then I had a bit of basketball and rounded the evening off with a game of soccer!'

'Lorks O Lordy' thought the entire Ocean staff and they all rushed off to phone an ambulance.

But porky Paul had really been sitting in a comfy armchair waggling his joystick to *Game Set And Match* – Ocean's fabbo new sporting compilation! And he's so enamoured of these armchair sports he's taken to Winter Olympics as well!

Winter Olympics is a new departure for Ocean because it's got nothing to do with computers at all. It's an interactive video board game. So to play it you're going to need a video recorder and that's top prize!



Crash Competition

First prize: VIDEO RECORDER

Well groovy – not only can you play *Winter Olympics* with this video recorder, but you can watch films in the comfort of your own room and you need never miss an episode of *Neighbours*. In addition to the video recorder, the first prizewinner will receive copies of *Winter Olympics* and the Spectrum *Game Set And Match*.

Four second prizes: WINTER OLYMPICS

There are four copies of Ocean's new video board game (each worth £29.99) for runners-up. Winter Olympics combines action from the 1984 Winter Olympics with the strategy of coaching your athletes to win the most medals. With official footage from ABC Sports, *Winter Olympics* puts you right in the middle of nine different events – speed skating, slalom, ski jumping, downhill, figure skating, luge, bobsled, hockey and cross-country events. You play them on the board and watch them on the video! The second prizewinners also receive a copy of *Game Set And Match* each.

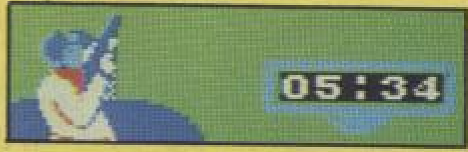
To be eligible for a super sporting prize just complete two tasks.

First find all the words listed below in the grid and mark them (to make the judging easier, draw a clear line through or around the letters, as we've done for OCEAN).

Then identify the screen shot from Game Set And Match . . .

OCEAN ✓	N	S	W	O	C	E	A	N	P	S
GAME ✓	E	S	C	I	P	M	Y	L	O	I
SET ✓	L	E	C	T	A	A	M	B	D	H
MATCH ✓	L	S	E	T	L	G	W	M	E	S
VIDEO ✓	O	E	C	D	I	V	I	D	E	O
WINTER ✓	C	H	S	A	R	C	N	S	D	B
OLYMPICS ✓	K	O	N	A	M	I	T	S	O	C
BOARD ✓	G	A	R	E	B	S	E	A	I	W
CRASH ✓	N	M	K	C	H	J	R	K	V	K
KONAMI ✓	B	P	W	L	P	D	M	D	N	R

Pictured here is a screen shot from one of the games included in Game Set And Match. Tell us on the form which of the compilation's games it comes from, and which event it depicts.



NAME Terry Winstanley

ADDRESS ....

....

.... POSTCODE ....

THE SCREEN SHOT IS FROM Supertest

AND THE EVENT IN IT IS Skeet shooting

Send the form and grid to: **SUPER SPORTS COMP, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*** to arrive no later than November 25. The winners will be drawn from the correct entries randomly and the decision of CRASH's judges in all respects is final.

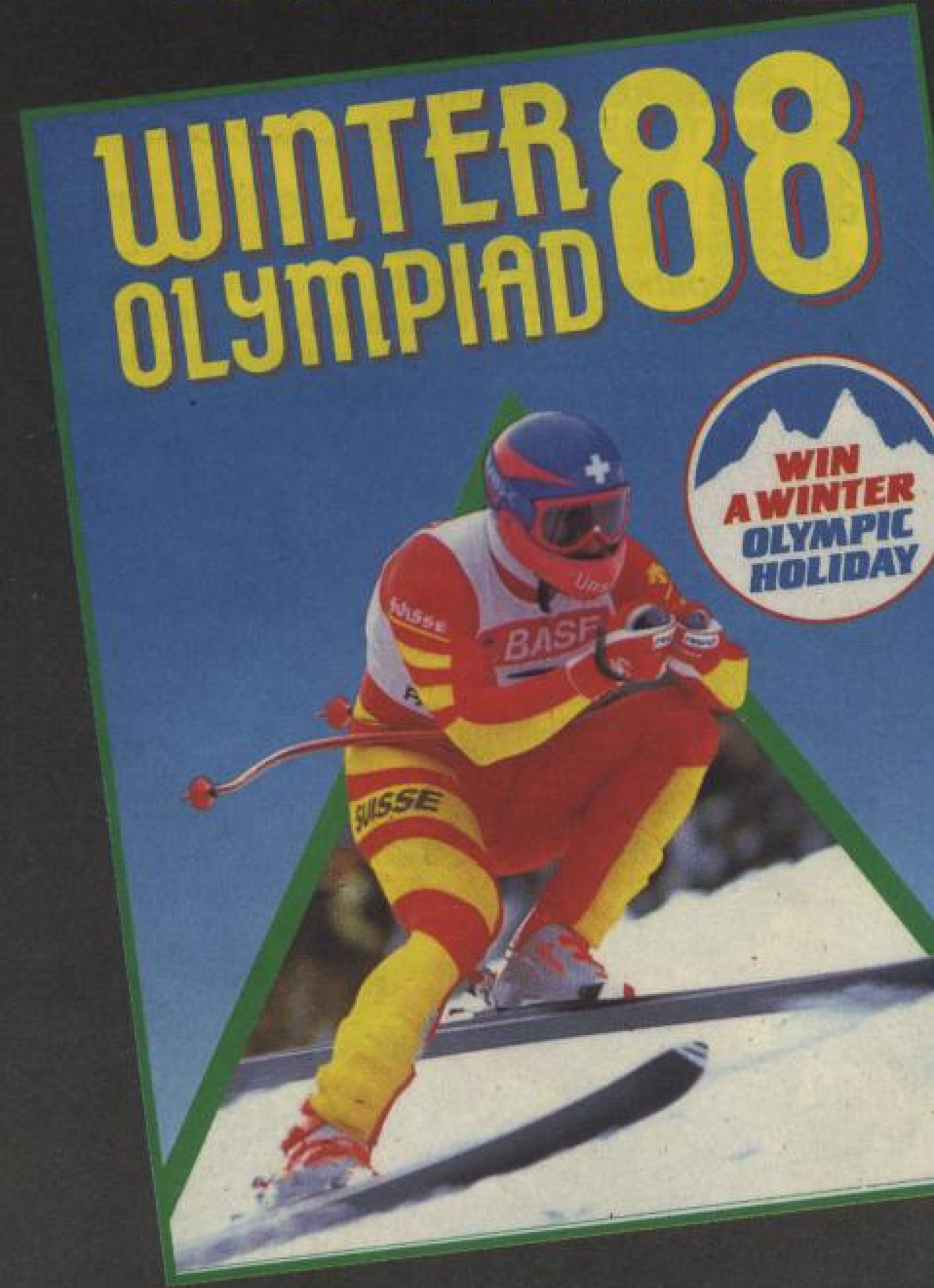


Ten runners-up: *GAME SET AND MATCH*

An action-oriented new compilation from Ocean combining the best of the Spectrum sports game on four tapes, *Game Set And Match* retails at £12.95 and includes: *GBA Basketball*, *Hyper Sports* with all eight events, *CDS Pool*, *Ping Pong*, Super Soccer, *Barry McGuigan's Boxing*, *Tennis!*, *World Series Baseball*, *Jonah Barrington's Squash* and *Daley Thompson's Supertest*. What a lot – and there's five of these compilations for runners-up.

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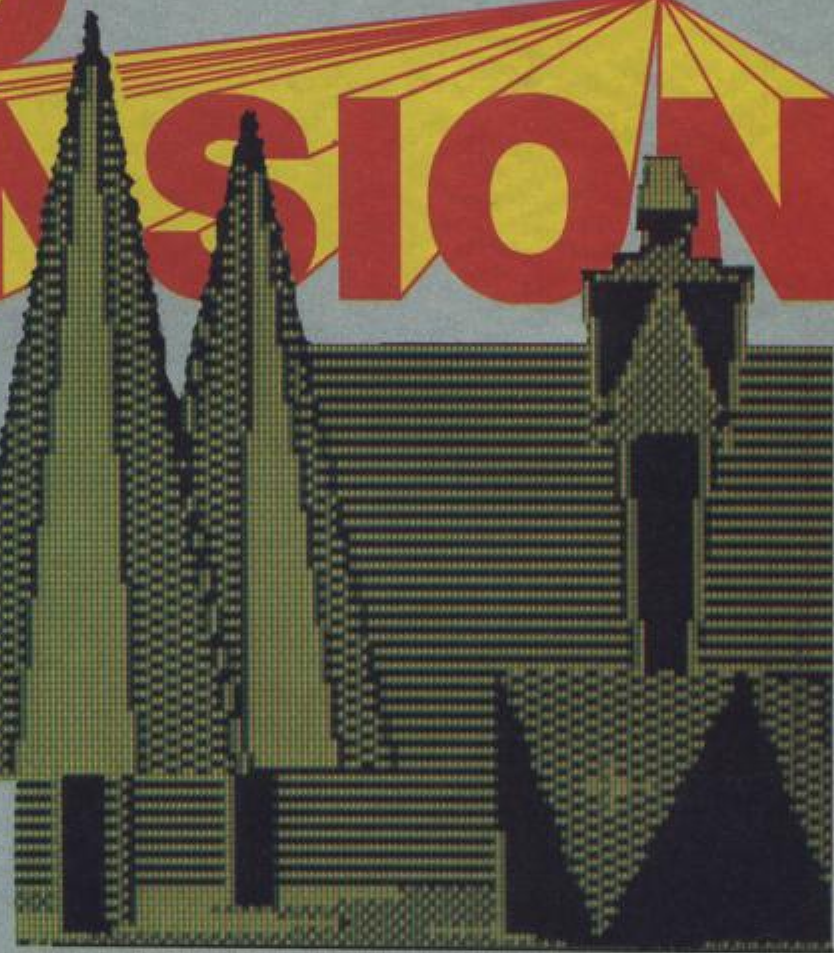




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INTO THE THIRD DIMENSION



► After its press acclaim as probably the best game ever written for any computer, one can't really leave out Firebird's *The Sentinel* (Issue 40 Smash). It's hard to describe the feeling that the graphics impart; the excellent shading and perspective, and the way the player moves around the playing area, give a better impression of actually being than any other Spectrum game. (Ben Stone)

Is 3-D 'just another view' or 'the only way to do it'? The third dimension in games (the fourth, actually, because time is a dimension!) can often be mere gimmickry, but 3-D masterpieces have earned some of CRASH's highest ratings ever. BEN STONE traces their history from *3D Ant Attack* to *Mercenary* and talks to the programmers; MIKE DUNN joins him to present a screen-shot gallery of the 3-D world.

Also in this section: how we did 3-D, a chance to try your own 3–D drawing – and the inside story on Incentive's Freescape technique, which makes its debut this autumn in *Driller*.

ONCE UPON a time, in the early Spectrum days, '3-D' prefixing a game's name (*3D Ant Attack*, *3D Lunattack*) or the infamous quote 'amazing 3-D graphics' printed on an inlay would guarantee an increase in sales of almost 30% (CRASH Mail Order estimate). Many game producers jumped onto the 3-D bandwagon with their own idea of the extra dimension, and some so-called 3-D was little more than two-dimensional graphics with extra shading or bas-relief that could create an illusion of physical depth but added nothing to the gameplay.

In May 1984 Hewson Consultants, as Hewson was then known, became concerned with this pseudo3-D software, and organised a press conference on the use of 3-D. At the gathering Steve Turner, author of Hewson's very successful Seiddab trilogy, gave his definition of 3-D:

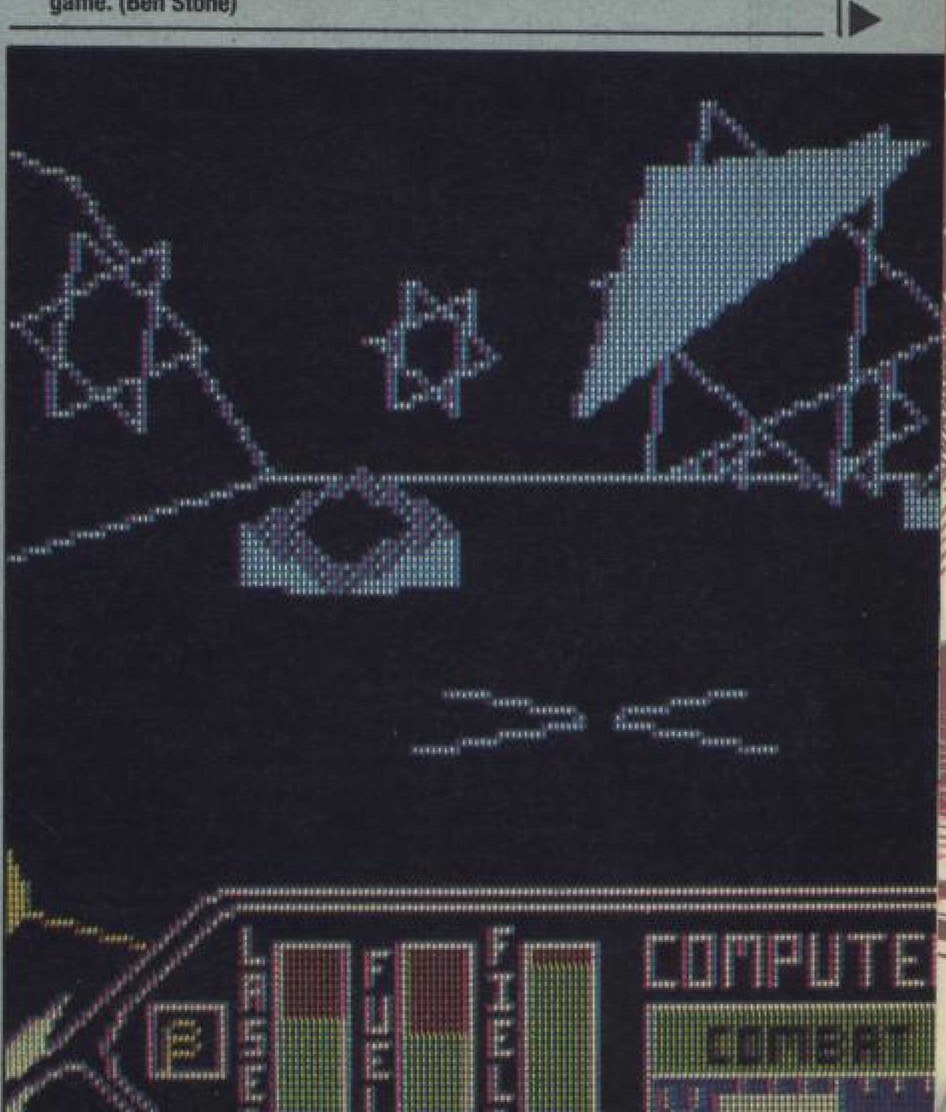
'The player should, for the majority of the time, appear to be immersed in a dynamic playing area. There should normally be some approximation to true perspective unless other sufficient strong three-dimensional cues are present.

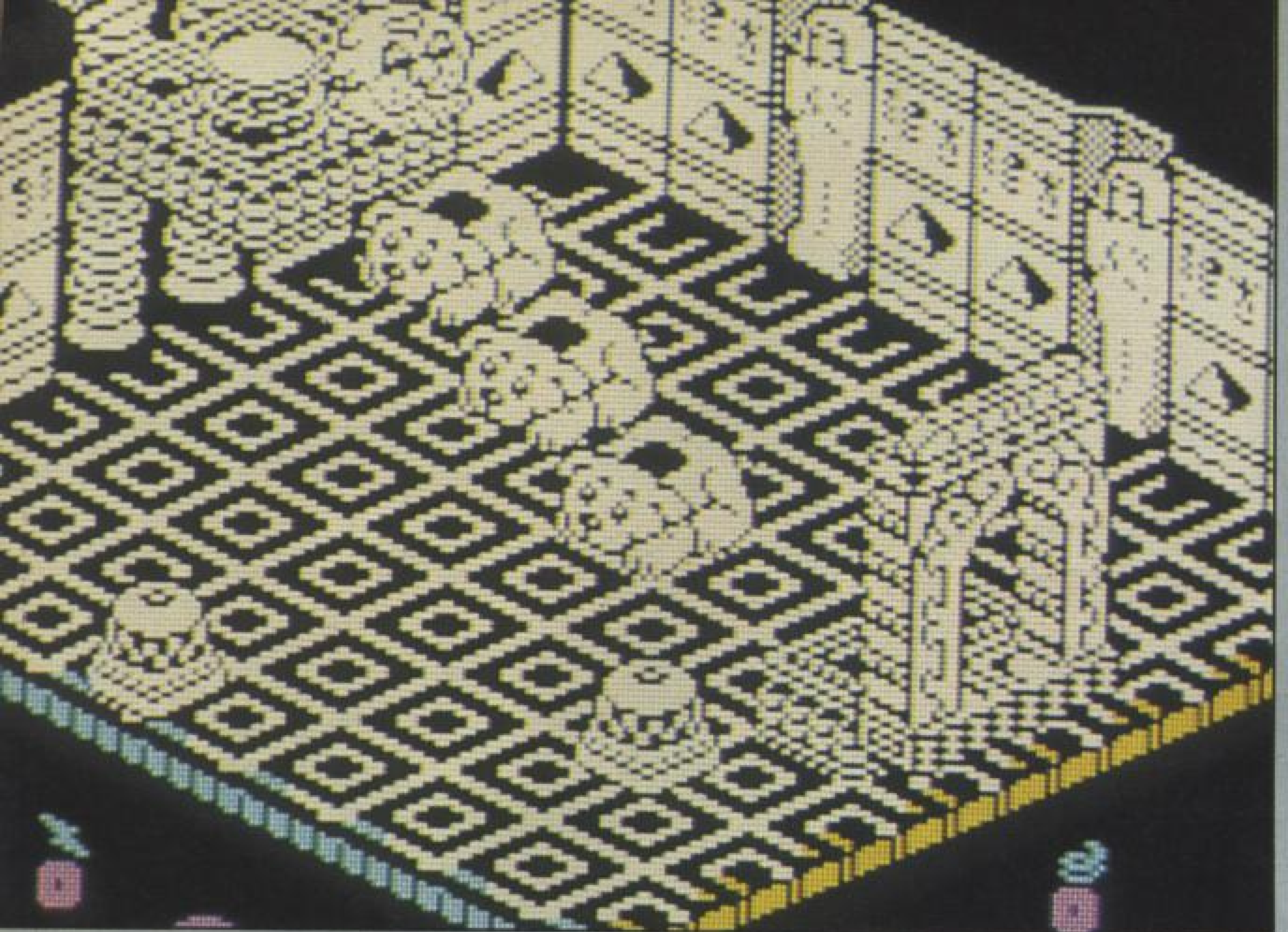
'This definition allows two main types of game to be classified as 3-D. In the first type the player is represented by a figure on the screen but his view is from a position above and outside the playing area. 3-D effects are generated by strong visual cues in the shapes and shading of the playing area. In the second type the player is not represented on screen but instead has an *eyeball* or *cockpit* view of the playing area. He can manoeuvre within the area and the 3-D effects are generated by perspective and parallax using a vanishing point.' (This quote is taken from the feature on 3-D in CRASH Issue 6.)

It's difficult to think of any games that differ from the two outlines above – it would be pretty hard to conceive and produce a 3-D game that didn't fall into one of Turner's categories.

Some games, like CRL's *Room*

► A lot of people said *Starstrike II* only got such raves (it was a 96% Smash in Issue 28) because reviewers were so amazed by Realtime's 3-D technique that they hadn't taken gameplay into account. I disagree with that, but it does go to show just how stunning the scenes are. Speed is something of a problem, but the shaded vector graphics more than make up for any movement hassles. This is one of the most graphically stimulating games around. (Mike Dunn)





▶ Ocean's *Head Over Heels* (97% Smash Issue 39) has so much more than other forced-perspective games: amusement, real puzzles and excellent graphics. The characters are simple, effective, easily recognisable and yet still good enough to make Jon Ritman and Bernie Drummond's masterpiece stand graphically head and heels over just about everything else ever. (Mike Dunn)

Ten (imagine it as wireframed Ping-Pong in a box; author Pete Cooke later did CRL's *Academy* and Nexus's *Micronaut One*) and Electric Dreams's *I, Of The Mask* (marvellously-shaded vector graphics with a character running in the centre of the screen but viewed from a cockpit) have combined the two types of 3-D to nicely disconcerting effect.

A VOYAGE ROUND 3-D

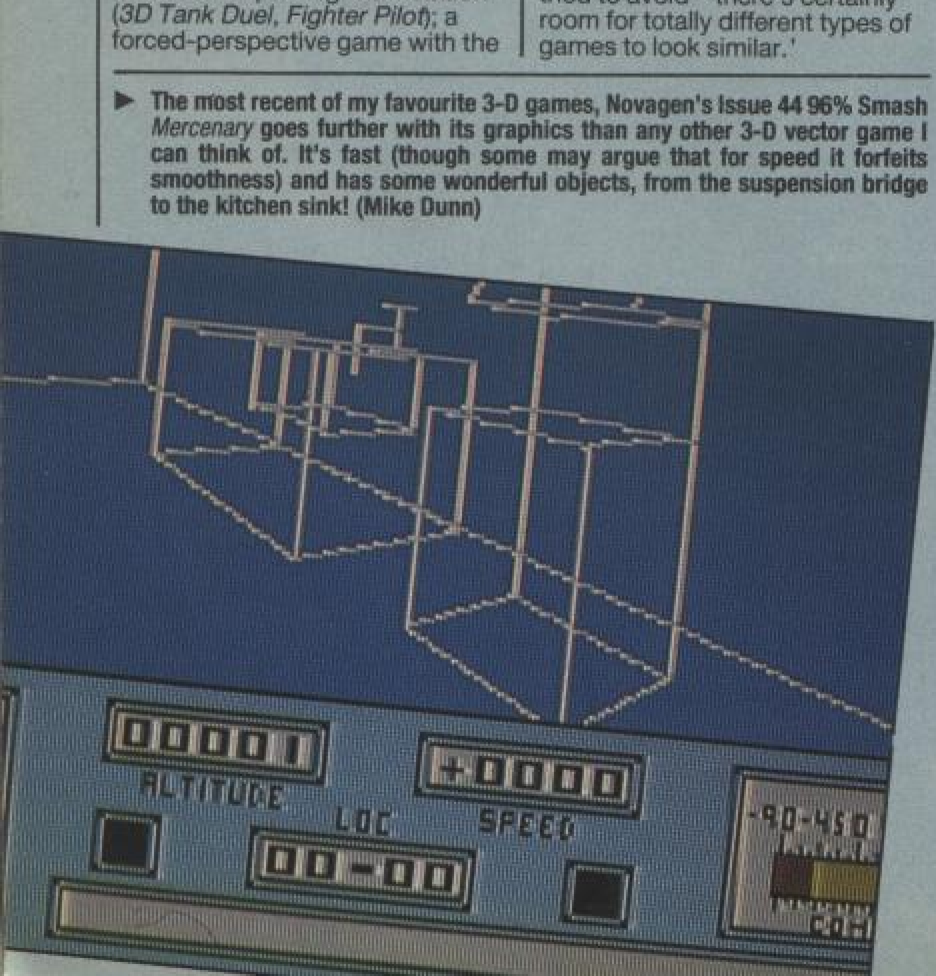
As well as two distinct types of 3-D presentation, there are two distinct types of 3-D game. You'd expect something with a cockpit view of vector graphics to be a shoot-'em-up or flight simulation (*3D Tank Duel, Fighter Pilot*); a forced-perspective game with the character on the screen (bird's-eye view) would probably be a puzzle-solving, collecting-objects maze type of game (*Knight Lore, Ant Attack, Nosferatu*).

There are, of course, some exceptions, like Postern's *3-D Deep Space* (written by Mike *Doomdark's Revenge* Singleton), which used a technique very similar to that used in the 3-D pages of this very CRASH.

And Steve Turner comments 'I hate the typecasting of games'; there are, after all, only a few different ways of seeing the screen so it's meaningless to liken one game to another just because they both display action the same way.

Pete Cooke says the typecasting is 'something that I've tried to avoid – there's certainly room for totally different types of games to look similar.'

▶ The most recent of my favourite 3-D games, Novagen's Issue 44 96% Smash *Mercenary* goes further with its graphics than any other 3-D vector game I can think of. It's fast (though some may argue that for speed it forfeits smoothness) and has some wonderful objects, from the suspension bridge to the kitchen sink! (Mike Dunn)



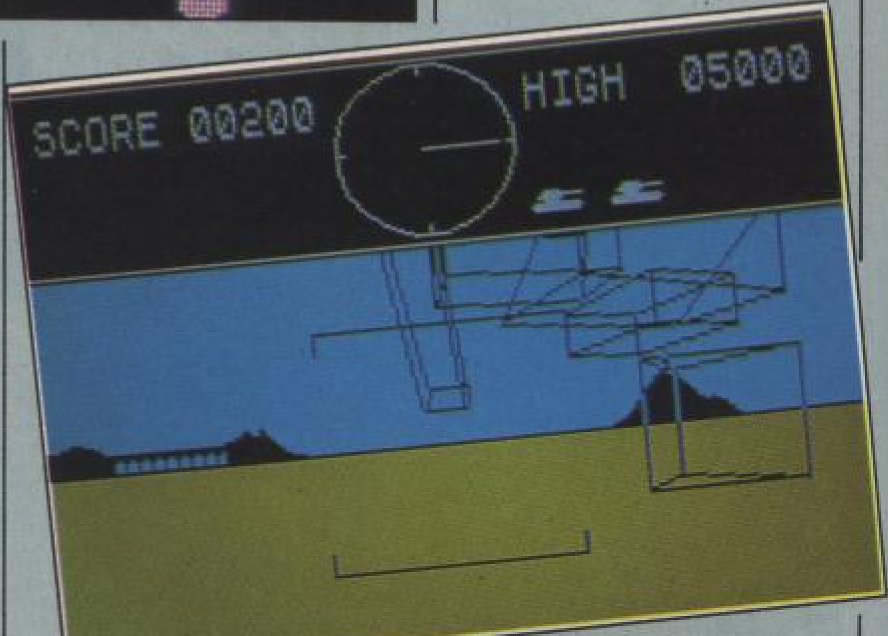
PRO AND CON 3-D

The best thing about 3-D games, for the CRASH reviewers at least, is the great atmosphere they create. Everything is so much more believable because it looks closer to real life.

Steve Turner again: 'The extra dimension enhances games, and if it's done well enough it creates an illusion of reality in the screen, which is something I'm into creating.'

This illusion of reality is maximised when the player has a first-person or cockpit view from the F-16 or Super-Dooper Battle Tank they're controlling. As Pete Cooke says, 'first-person perspective is the best way of doing things on 8-bit machines because you're actually *in* the game.'

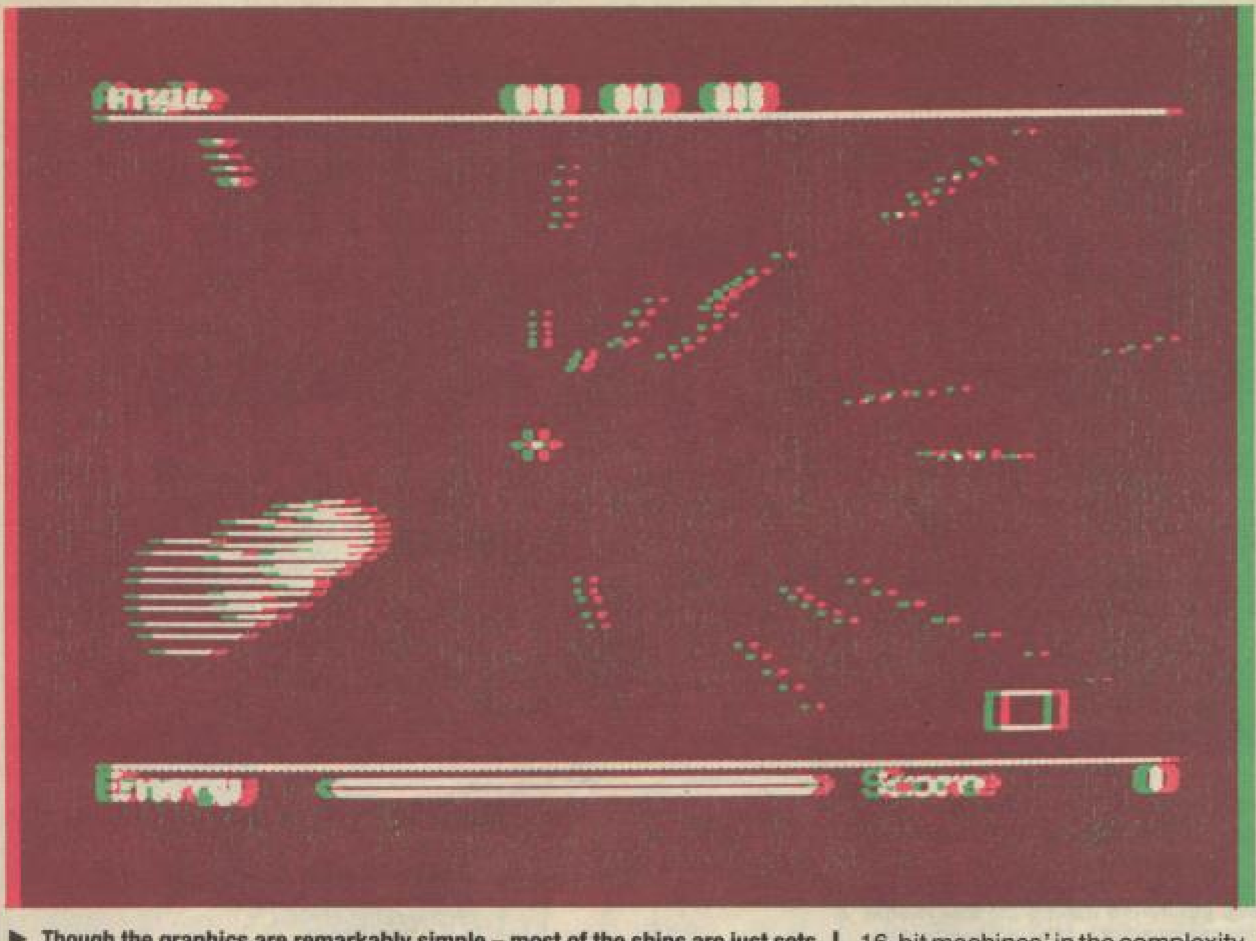
Backing him up, Realtime's Ian Oliver reckons first-person perspective is so popular because the Z80 processor is very good at vector graphics, it's very fast, and speed is the main ingredient of a good shoot-'em-up. 'That's why



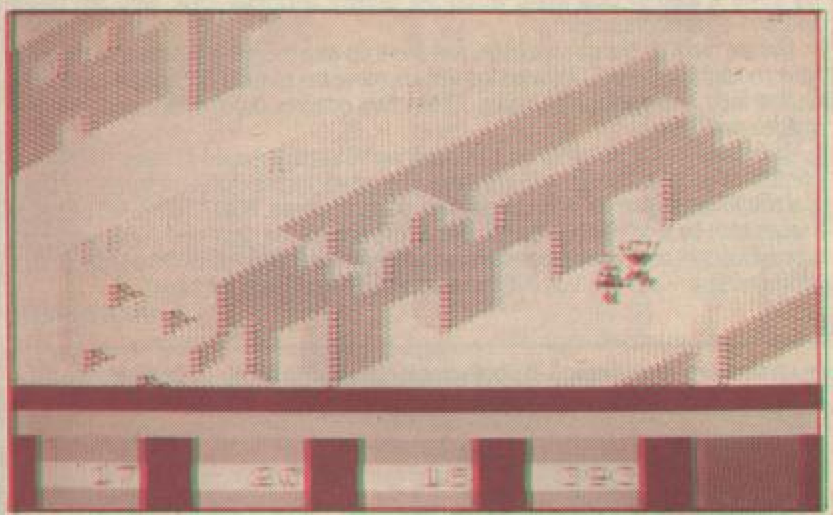
▶ A simple shoot-'em-up? No way. A huge amount of strategy can be, and often has to be, put into Realtime's *3D Tank Duel* (Issue 7 review) simply because of its 3-D complexity. (Ben Stone)



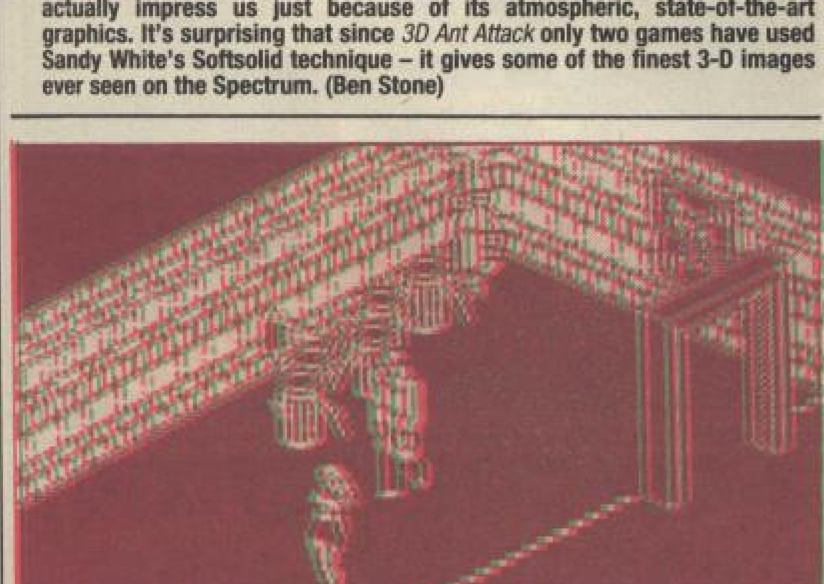
▶ Good vector graphics can create a fantastic effect, as in Rainbird's *Starglider* (an Issue 36 Smash with 95% and 97% for the 128 version). There's lots going on and the fast graphics add to a great, atmospheric shoot-'em-up. (Ben Stone)



▶ **Though the graphics are remarkably simple – most of the ships are just sets of parallel lines – Design Design's Issue 11 Smash *Dark Star* is very impressive, probably because of the speed with which things move. It plays well, too – I was at it almost continuously one Christmas holiday. (Mike Dunn)**



▶ **Quicksilva's *3D Ant Attack* (not reviewed in CRASH) was the first 3-D game to actually impress us just because of its atmospheric, state-of-the-art graphics. It's surprising that since *3D Ant Attack* only two games have used Sandy White's Softsolid technique – it gives some of the finest 3-D images ever seen on the Spectrum. (Ben Stone)**



▶ **Imagine's Issue 26 Smash *M.O.V.I.E.* is graphically brilliant. The programmers approached the game with real objects instead of fantastical ones, confining themselves to reasonable dimensions and recognisable but detailed shapes. (Mike Dunn)**

nobody's used anything like Freescape *(see the article in this section)* before, it's not that it's very difficult to do or anything, it's just that no-one has thought of a decent game plan to put around the sluggish technique.'

But Sandy White, renowned as the first programmer to write a real isometric-perspective 3-D game (*3D Ant Attack*), insists 'Freescape has done well to compete with the 16-bit machines' in the complexity of its solid 3-D world. White is a sculptor as well as a games programmer, so it's no surprise that his limited, but careful, output has all been 3-D. He says '3-D is the only way to do it . . .'

That's not a sentiment which Graham Stafford, half of Design Design, agrees with entirely. '3-D is good when used properly,' says Stafford, 'but it's not essential, far from it. Sometimes it's just a trick.'

Steve Turner, the man who offered those early definitions at the Hewson Consultants press conference, looks back on a trick's history: 'At the start a lot of people thought that 3-D was a passing phase. Over the years I think that it's more than proved its usefulness in the computer game. I doubt that 3-D games will drastically improve on the Spectrum from now on, though – most of the programming techniques possible must have been used by now . . .'

And while David Llewellyn, the other half of Design Design, muses that 'it's nice to present puzzles that can only been seen in 3-D', he points out that 'you can represent any 3-D in 2-D if you try. It's just a view, you're always looking for another view.'

READING UP THE THIRD DIMENSION

GIVEN AWAY FREE with Design Design's 3-D *Dark Star* was the teletext fun package *Spectacle*. It mentions a university textbook, *Principles Of Interactive Computer Graphics* (published by McGraw-Hill), which covers the rudiments of 3-D graphics. Says Design Design's Graham Stafford: 'It's as boring as hell, but it explains everything that you want to know about 3-D graphics.'

FREESCAPE – ALL THE SCREENS YOU CAN EAT!

THERE ARE 20,000 billion screens, give or take a thousand billion, in Incentive Software's *Driller* (that's 20,000,000,000,000,000 or is it 20,000,000,000,000 these days?).

There are just three spatial dimensions in *Driller*, but it simulates movement in the real 3-D world better than any game yet. You can go over and below objects, crawl round the back of them, see things from any angle and look over your shoulder at the landscape through which you've passed.

Driller, featured on last month's CRASH Sampler, introduces the Freescape technique which Incentive's Major Developments team has worked on for the last 14 months. The walk-through filled three-dimensional graphics display every detail (of admittedly undetailed screens) in real perspective. It's just like being there; it's a bit like being there on a pogo stick – on preview copies the movement from one view to another is jerky.

Driller has a straightforward enough space scenario: dangerous gas is building up beneath the moon's surface, so the player must locate the pockets of gas and drill holes in exactly the right places to allow the gas to diffuse.

But the real story is the technical one. 'When the Freescape idea was conceived,' says Incentive's Ian Andrew, 'several programmers approached turned down the opportunity to be involved, saying it couldn't be done. Well, it has!'

The 3-D *Driller* world was designed in two dimensions using a customised programming utility; three dimensions were produced by combining a plan and side and front elevations of each object.

It was fine-tuned using the *Freescape Editor*, with which the Major Developments team can alter graphics and gameplay from within *Driller*'s 3-D environment.

The data is terrifically compressed, 'enabling massive environments to be available in a single load,' Andrew points out.

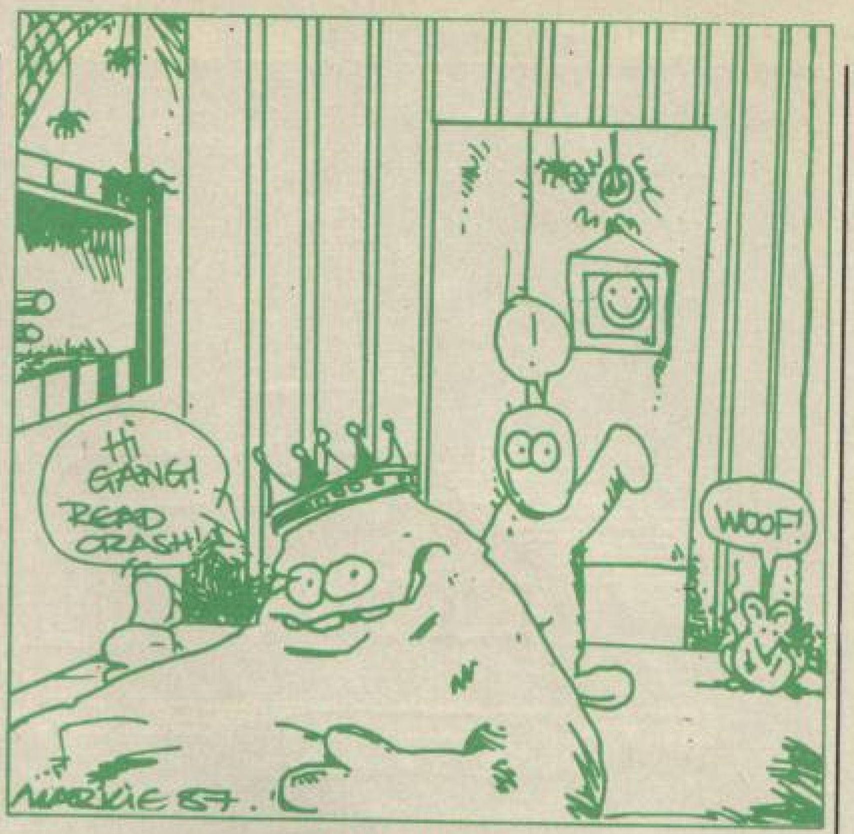
To give the 3-D effect, 'all visible objects are priority-sorted (it's decided which objects obscure others),' he explains, 'and drawn solidly using an unorthodox filling technique for speed.'

Freescape is 'probably the most advanced program yet written on 8-bit machines, featuring an incredible amount of maths,' enthuses Andrew. And he reckons 'it'll take a good player a month, an average player half a year to a year' to complete the game.

The November Spectrum release from Incentive will cost £14.95 (that price includes a novella and a 3-D mapping model), and a 16-bit Freescape is scheduled for March 1988.

BARNABY PAGE





► **Place your paper over the RED drawing, but before tracing the image with your red crayon trace the two little crosses carefully. After completing the red drawing, move the paper over to exactly centre your two red crosses over the ones provided above and below the GREEN drawing. Now trace the green drawing, and then check the result through your CRASH spectacles.**

AMAZE YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS!

THAT'S what we did. Experts told the Newsfield art department that producing 3-D illustrations and text effects would be time-consuming and very expensive – we didn't want to waste time or money, so we did it ourselves. And if you have a talent with a pencil, you can repeat our efforts and produce your very own three-dimensional drawings to be viewed through the free glasses provided with this issue.

But first things first: how does it work? Our eyes each see a slightly different version of the same view (they're separated by about two-and-a-half inches), and when combined by the brain these two images create a stereoscopic effect of depth. Try closing one eye and then seeing how good you are at judging distances . . . the world through one eye is two-dimensional.

To recreate a stereoscopic image from a flat surface – in other words, to make two dimensions look like three – we have to cheat. The single drawing must be cut up to create subtly different versions for each eye. The glasses are used to filter the light so each eye sees only one of the two versions, simulating the way your eyes see the real world.

But there's no real need to cut up both versions. If you take an illustration and call it the left-eye image (which will be printed in red), then the right-eye image (printed in green) is the one to treat specially, cutting up the various planes of depth (foreground, middle distance, background etc) by sliding them sideways to the left and right.

First decide how many depth planes you want in the picture. At the midrange point, both red and green images are exactly superimposed. Anything in the foreground requires the green image to be cut and displaced to the right – the 'nearer' it should appear, the further right it must be moved. Objects in the background require the green image to be similarly displaced to the left.

As you displace segments of the drawing, of course, you cover up bits and reveal gaps. Covering something up presents no problem, but the gaps have to be carefully redrawn – otherwise they'd show up in the finished illustration.

In a 3-D magazine like this CRASH, the two 'altered' drawings are then planned in with the rest of the page elements – text can be treated the same way – and printed with specially designed red and green inks.

The idea is simple; the spectacles' coloured foils match the inks. Hold the green lens over the page and the green ink is invisible, so the right eye sees only the red image, and it sees it as black. Similarly, the left eye sees only the green image. The brain unscrambles the two distinct images and interprets the result as three-dimensional. Clever, huh?

DIY 3-D

You can use these 3-D spectacles with your own drawings. Here's how.

You need to find green and red crayons whose colours match those of the lenses as nearly as possible. Check each crayon's colour matches by scribbling with it and then holding the lens of the same colour over the scribble. If the crayon marks vanish, that's great, and if there's only a faint shadow visible you're still in with a chance!

Now take the red crayon, lay a thin piece of paper over the RED diagram on this page and trace the lines. Then take the green crayon, move the paper over to the GREEN diagram and trace those lines. Look at the result through the spectacles and – hey presto! A 3-D picture!

Having grasped the principles by which this works, you can start creating your own 3-D images with these two crayons, perhaps at first by copying some of the 3-D illustrations in this CRASH. (When you feel you're good enough, how about entering a little CRASH 3-D comp, details right?)

3-D PHOTOS

Photographs can also be treated in 3-D, but unlike a drawing, which is falsely given depth, a photograph must be stereoscopic to begin with. A stereoscopic still life is easily done with any camera, as our example here proves. Set up the objects on a table, and lay down a strip of tape along which the camera back can slide, with two marks two-and-a-half inches apart.

Make a mark on the camera back, and line it up with the left-hand mark on the tape. Now photograph the still life, wind the film on, move the camera to the right-hand mark on the tape and photograph again. These two pictures are the left- and right-eye images respectively.

Of course, in the example on this page we've superimposed the two photos and printed them in red (for the left-eye view) and green (for the right-eye view), but there is a painful technique for seeing your own prints in stereo. REVERSE the left and right images side by side – ie put the left-eye to the right of the right-eye! – stare at them, cross your eyes and superimpose the central image your brain sees. It'll be in 3-D. This takes practice – and don't do it if the wind's about to change direction!

ROGER KEAN

► **A simple stereoscopic 3-D photograph of a still life set up by Cameron Pound**



3-DIY COMPETITION

HERE'S a little extra fun competition for anyone. Having mastered the technique of producing 3-D images with a green and a red crayon, send us a 3-D illustration. Drawings should be no larger than A4 size (210mm x 297mm) and they can be of any subject you like. We don't even mind if you copy them from CRASH, but they MUST NOT be copied from any of the 3-D illustrations in this issue – that would be cheating!

The three best 3-D effect drawings (as judged by Barnaby Page, Roger Kean, Oli Frey and 3-D whizkid Mark Kendrick) will each earn their sender a CRASH subscription (or a year's extension of an existing sub) and a CRASH T-shirt of the artist's choice (state type – they're listed in this issue's Hypermarket – and size: medium or XXL).

The very best of the three will also earn its sender the top prize: a trio of 30 Stabilo colour pens.

Get your drawings in by December 10 latest. Don't forget to state your name, address and T-shirt type and size (on the same piece of paper as the artwork, if possible), and don't worry about the spectacles – we've got plenty of those to judge the drawings!

The address is: **3-DIY COMP, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*.**


ULTIMATE
PLAY THE GAME
PRESENT
JETMAN
LOOK OUT, GORDON, BEHIND YOU!!
HAH!
YOU CAN'T FOOL ME WITH AN OL' TRICK LIKE THAT
BEHIND YOU, GORDON!
DUCK!
DUCK!
DUCK!
HAH! I...
REMEMBER HOW OUR HERO THOUGHT HE WAS KING OF THE PLURPS, BUT HE WASN'T, AND HOW HE THOUGHT HE WAS GOING TO CRASH ON THE PLANET, AN' HE DID, AN' HOW CASTAWAY FLASH GORDON WAS GOIN' TO HAVE HIM FOR CRASHIN' ON A DOUBLE YELLOW LINE, AN' STILL IS, AND HOW JETMAN TRIED TO FOOL HIM..? REE DON...
WAAAK WAK
..LOOK OUT!!
HAH! NOTHING WRONG WITH MY REACTIONS...
NOPE... A DEADLY SNAKE!!
LATER...
SHADDAP!
BOY! THESE SNAKEBURGERS ARE DELICIOUS... I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE THAT HUNGRY...
WOW! GREAT!
RIGHT! AN' NOW ALLOW ME TO SHOW YOU WHAT I HAVE SPENT THE LAST 30 YEARS IN THE BUILDING...
TA-RAA

the crash CHARTS



TOP GAMES NOVEMBER

The three charts compiled from the votes of CRASH readers is the most realistic chart for gauging the popularity of Spectrum games – it is the games that are being played that get the votes, not the games that are in the shops this week or month.

And the votes are important. It's up to you to let us know what you feel, so fill in the voting forms which live on the results pages and in FRONTLINE to make your voice heard.

If you don't want to carve up your issue of CRASH, we understand. Use a photocopy if you like, or copy the details from the voting forms onto a postcard, or the back of a sealed envelope, and send that to us instead.

Apart from the satisfaction of registering your vote, there's always the chance of winning a prize. Each month we draw 15 winners from all the voting forms received – five for the HOTLINE, five for the ADVENTURE and five for the STRATEGY chart.

A top prize of £40 worth of software (your choice, not ours) and a CRASH T-shirt is awarded to the first slip drawn from the HOTLINE votes, and another £40 of goodies and a shirt goes to the ADVENTURE and £20 of goodies and a shirt goes to the STRATEGY

Four runners up from each ballot box collect a CRASH T-shirt and a CRASH Hat. So get those votes in to the **CRASH HOTLINE CHART**, **CRASH ADVENTURE CHART** and **CRASH STRATEGY CHART**: ***PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.***

Those *Desert Rats* crawl fast, but the ship isn't sinking – *Vulcan* and *Rebelstar Raiders* are STILL at the top, where they started. PSS and CCS all but monopolise the chart, showing how software houses still consider strategy a specialist interest, and perhaps not a lucrative one. Are they right?

From Newport in south Wales come 105,374 people (1981 figures), but from Shipley in West Yorkshire comes CRASH's strategy-form-filler-out of the month,* Robert Newall. *The runners-up:* Robert Brand *of Slough in Berkshire,* S Hornblow *of Basingstoke in Hampshire,* Martin Greenwell *of Earl Shilton in Leicestershire,* Andrew Green *of Walsall in Staffordshire and* Robert Keeling *of Sandbach in Cheshire. He won't need all those protective Sandbachs now he's got a CRASH cap and T-shirt . . .

***Paper Boy* is back on his round, edging up toward the Number Two spot he occupied a couple of months ago. *Elite* clearly isn't any more, and *Match Day* seems to have met its match too. But *Exolon* flies in to glory like the intergalactic cavalry, entering the chart at Number Five.**

This month's big prize goes to* Bob Ford *of Durrington near Salisbury – who listed Firebird's* Druid *and Gremlin's* Way Of The Tiger *among his favourites as well as* Gauntlet *et al. Still, we won't hold that against him . . . Runners-up are* Gregory Wye *of Bidford-On-Avon in Warwickshire,* Barry Smith *of Ipswich in Suffolk,* Michael Jarrett *of Feltham in Middlesex (any relation of ZZAP!'s Steve? Let's hope not, for Middlesex's sake . . .) and* Ravi Deaper *of Okehampton in Devon.

Strategy Top Ten

1 *(1)*	**VULCAN**	CCS
2 *(2)*	**REBELSTAR RAIDERS**	FIREBIRD
3 *(3)*	**ARNHEM**	CCS
4 *(10)*	**DESERT RATS**	CCS
5 *(4)*	**THEATRE EUROPE**	PSS
6 *(-)*	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT**	BEYOND
7 *(-)*	**YANKEE**	CCS
8 *(6)*	**TOBRUK**	PSS
9 *(-)*	**BISMARCK**	PSS
10 *(7)*	**BATTLE OF BRITAIN**	PSS



Hotline Top 20

1 *(1)*	**GAUNTLET**	US GOLD
2 *(3)*	**ENDURO RACER**	ACTIVISION
3 *(2)*	**HEAD OVER HEELS**	OCEAN
4 *(8)*	**PAPER BOY**	ELITE
5 *(▶)*	**EXOLON**	HEWSON
6 *(17)*	**ZYNAPS**	HEWSON
7 *(10)*	**COBRA**	OCEAN
8 *(4)*	**URIDIUM**	HEWSON
9 *(11)*	**ARKANOID**	IMAGINE
10 *(-)*	**LEADERBOARD**	US GOLD
11 *(9)*	**BARBARIAN**	PALACE
12 *(5)*	**ELITE**	FIREBIRD
13 *(-)*	**QUAZATRON**	HEWSON
14 *(6)*	**MATCH DAY**	OCEAN
15 *(14)*	**STAR GLIDER**	RAINBIRD
16 *(7)*	**BOMBJACK**	ELITE
17 *(18)*	**BATMAN**	OCEAN
18 *(-)*	**LIGHTFORCE**	FTL
19 *(-)*	**COMMANDO**	ELITE
20 *(-)*	**MICRONAUT ONE**	NEXUS

Adventure Top 20

1 *(1)*	**THE HOBBIT**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
2 *(12)*	**STORMBRINGER**	M.A.D.
3 *(3)*	**SPELLBOUND**	M.A.D.
4 *(2)*	**HEAVY ON THE MAGICK**	GARGOYLE GAMES
5 *(4)*	**KNIGHT TYME**	M.A.D.
6 *(9)*	**LORD OF THE RINGS**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
7 *(7)*	**THE BOGGIT**	CRL
8 *(5)*	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT**	BEYOND
9 *(10)*	**THE PRICE OF MAGICK**	LEVEL 9
10 *(18)*	**FAIRLIGHT 2**	THE EDGE
11 *(11)*	**GREMLINS**	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
12 *(19)*	**DRACULA**	CRL
13 *(6)*	**DOOMDARK'S REVENGE**	BEYOND
14 *(14)*	**RED MOON**	LEVEL 9
15 *(▶)*	**THE BIG SLEAZE**	PIRANHA
16 *(-)*	**SHERLOCK**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
17 *(-)*	**SHADOWS OF MORDOR**	MELBOURNE HSE
18 *(▶)*	**THE PAWN**	RAINBIRD
19 *(-)*	**HAMPSTEAD**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
20 *(▶)*	**KILLED UNTIL DEAD**	US GOLD

Stormbringer must be breaking some kind of record with its ten-place ascent – and it scored 9% of ALL votes this month! No other significant changes, but three ▶s: *The Big Sleaze*, *The Pawn* and *Killed Until Dead*, all Smashes in the last six months. Melbourne House has a healthy quarter of all charted games.

The archadventurer winning this month's software prize is Gavin Horne *of Maidenhead in Berkshire; runners-up are* Wayne Styles *of Bolton in Manchester,* Neil Archer *of Wolverhampton (on a clear day he can see Shropshire, if not Ludlow),* Alistair Gentry *of Felixstowe in Suffolk, and* James Hardy *of Falkirk in Scotland's Central region.*

1987 PBM MAILBOX



Welcome to the first 3-D Mailbox – well, some of it's 3-D. Regular readers of the column may (or may not!) be surprised to learn that I have had *yet another* bump in my car. This time the back end has been smashed in – by a (so-called) friend!

Meanwhile, on the PBM front methinks I have just died in *Megalomania*. Roll on Game Three . . .

NEW GAMES

CIVILISATION AT LAST

CIVILISATIONS is run from London by its designer, Anthony White, who has created an interstellar economy within his Amstrad computer. A new player starts the game with a set amount of the stellar currency and a means of transport (which incurs running expenses . . .) to go from one planet to another.

You create a game character for yourself and further your character's aims using the available worlds and their own economies. Basically, you must remain both financially solvent and alive (there's no sense in being rich if you're going to get killed!)

The game is run in an open-ended fashion with turns made as often as possible.

An interesting feature of *Civilisations* is the use of the legal system. Do anything wrong in this game and you end up being tried for your crime – by a selection of your fellow players!

For more information, write to Anthony White at *11 Shrewsbury Road, New Southgate, London N11 2LL.* Further developments will be awaited with interest.

DUBIOUS OVERTONES

IN DUBIOUS BATTLE is the first product of Pandem Games, based in Northern Ireland. It's another of the unusual games launched recently, because instead of having one game environment, *In Dubious Battle* has two: The World (consisting at the start of the game of about 500 countries, with 100 nations of primitive tribes, nomads and farmers) and Elysium, a world of the gods inhabited by deities and deityesses. The player is one of these deities, albeit a fairly minor one at first – the object of the game is to become what the rulebook terms the 'Allfather' of the gods. This happens when at least 75% of the other gods (players or not) become subservient to you. It's not an easy task.

The two environments interact as the players go about their godly duties. They must gain power by making The World's mortals worship them, give them the odd sacrifice etc. The more worshippers you have, the more powerful your god is. Here the game becomes a little like the *real* world.

Different gods represent different aspects of life (there are gods of war, peace, love, fruit machines etc) and thus followers of one may well dislike worshippers of another. This may cause nations supporting you to battle with the supporters of another god – but war can reduce your godly power, so take care who you convert!

Battles are possible in Elysium itself. Gods can recruit demons and other lesser immortals to do dirty deeds to other players, such as knocking them out of the game. But take care as you grow in power within your own world; they certainly aren't all angels up there!

In Dubious Battle has an interesting concept, and a glance at the excellent rulebook reveals that there's more to it than first meets the eye. I'd recommend you read the book thoroughly before deciding whether or not to play; it can be bought for £1.50 from Pandem Games at *PO Box 127, Belfast 9, Northern Ireland.*

WAS THERE LIFE BEFORE PANGEA?

PANGEA is a hand-moderated fantasy role-playing game launched by the Surrey based Anvil Games in July. The authors have created a mystical world for your game character's adventures, and the marvellous rulebook is full of history: stories of ancient heroes, the wars they fought, the races they encountered, the deities they bumped into, but rarely the diseases they caught.



It's not only stories, though – there's a fascinating *Who's Who?* of the nine gods, plus eleven pages about the races of *Pangea*. Their habits, descriptions, localities, physical stature, virility, it's nearly all there! Besides the races there are character classes such as assassins, priests, rangers, rogues, warriors and warlocks; other features include guilds, various types of magic, methods of combat and so on.

You must design your character and set yourself a quest; there's a character-creation folder which could take the best part of a weekend to complete! If you enjoy FRP games then take a look at *Pangea*. It's very well-presented and the startup package has a lot to offer. Send an SAE for details to Anvil Games, *The Old Fire Station, Queen Street, Godalming, Surrey GU7 BD.*

NEW ORDERS FOR SCI-FI FANS

NEW ORDER could well prove to be THE game for sci-fi buffs, though without perseverance it could also prove to be the most irritating game for sci-fi buffs. *New Order* was designed in America and has been brought over the Atlantic under franchise to Jade Games. Like so many other games of its ilk, *New Order* puts you in charge of a planet-bound civilisation which discover hyperspace technology. Which race will dominate the space in which you live – your own, or an alien one? Here we go again . . . The answer is 'neither one nor the other' – only war will dominate such a situation.

I think the designers KNOW they have a goody here – the best features are listed on the front of the rulebook. They include: a 3-D playing area with 9,000 sectors; 200 star systems and 700 planets per game; detailed UFO, combat, colony, trade and atomics messages to survey alien activity around you; updated reports on all your forces on each turn; a complex combat-system design which lets you play about with both offence and defence; and an accurate damage indicator, detailing exactly what percentage of your ship has been destroyed.

Technological research is available to improve your game advantage in whatever field you choose, and five classes of starship are at your disposal in this game where trading and diplomacy take a crucial role. The object is to command your civilisation's economy, defence, social trends and alliances and thus become the most powerful ruler in the game.

New Order could be a viable alternative to sitting on the *StarGlobe* waiting list. Unlike games such as *Shattered World*, *New Order* is far from empty – I found the 68-page rulebook an

interesting and involving read.

It's computer-moderated and uses the deadline system (ten, 15 or 20 days). There's a lot to do each turn (the orders form is divided into 18 sections!), though at £2.50 a turn you certainly pay for it.

New Order will take a lot of playing to get right. It's good value for money, if you've got the time. Still interested? The rulebook costs £2.50 from Jade Games, *PO Box 54, Southsea, Hampshire PO4 0NA.*

WIN A CASTLE!

MANY READERS have suggested PBM Mailbox launch its own game. And here's what I've come up with . . .

In conjunction with Jade Games, two special games of *The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon* will be run exclusively for CRASH. The player with the highest score at the end of 25 turns wins a superb prize – a special-edition hand-built stone castle! No, I'm not joking. But I feel I should make it clear that this castle will only be about ten cubic feet big. The castle is a display piece, the sort of thing wargamers place on a sideboard in the sitting room for decoration.

The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon is a relatively low-priced game: startup is free and each turn costs only 70p. It has been designed for 100 players with a ten-day deadline/turnaround, and Jade claims you needn't even read the rulebook to play!

The theme of this game is (according to the accompanying booklet) 'diplomacy, skill and strategy'. You play a knight of Avalon, the legendary land of King Arthur, and you must use your supporting armies and religion (plus a hint of diplomatic skill) to explore Avalon, meet its people, and conquer its provinces.

As you grow in strength and fame your character builds up game points. After the first three rounds the player (or players) with the highest score in each round will have one free turn credited to their game account.

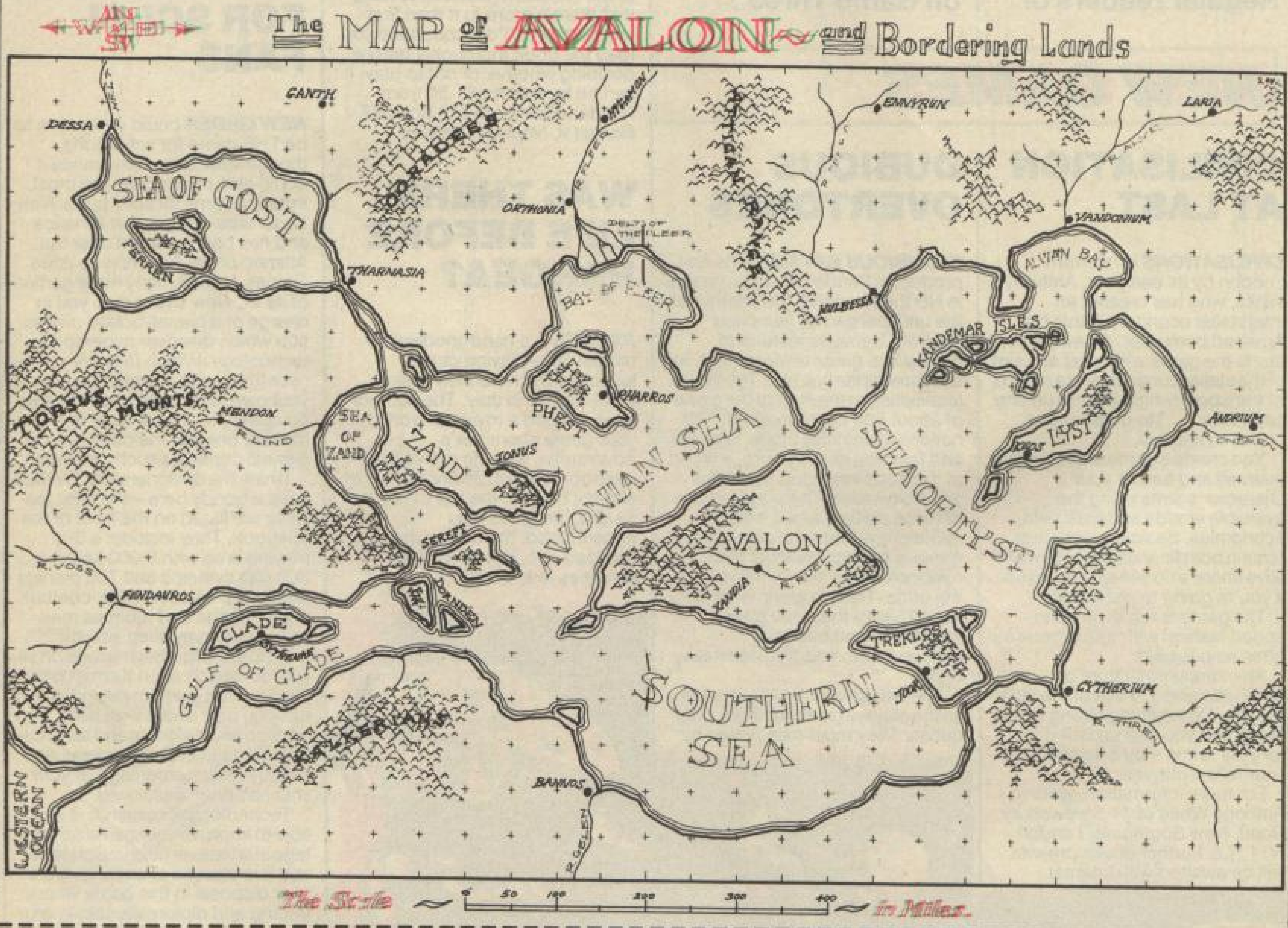
After 25 turns all the scores will be compared. If there is an outright winner, he or she will have the castle – their very own Camelot! If not, then the game will continue till one person holds the highest score.

Remember that *The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon* was designed to last for at least 50 turns. Once 25 turns are over (in approximately a year) the game will continue as a normal game, so hang in there!

For more information and your free startup pack, cut out the voucher printed here and post it to ***The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon***, CRASH Competition Game, Jade Games, *PO Box 54, Southsea, Hampshire PO4 0NA.* Please note that Jade Games and *not* CRASH is running the competition and games!

Progress in the two games will be followed closely in PBM Mailbox, with a list of the top ten players printed each month.

▶ This map shows Avalon, which can be divided into 50,400 squares. You can clearly see the 504 provinces, each being 50 miles square . . . it's quite an area to control, let alone attempt to conquer! Up-to-date maps of your provinces are shown on the turnsheet, followed by inventories of what's in the area. Don't forget that though there will be about 100 players in the game, everyone starts with only one province. This leaves 404 spare provinces to compete for . . . good luck!



This voucher entitles you to enter a special CRASH competition game of The Chronicles Of The Knights Of Avalon run by Jade Games. You may only use ONE of these vouchers.
The games begin in the week commencing December 7 1987 – if your entry is received by Jade Games later than this date you WILL NOT be eligible for the CRASH competition games.
Startup is free, but further turns will be charged for at the rate of 70p each or any other rate which may be set by Jade Games.
The competition and games are being run by Jade Games and are entirely their responsibility. CRASH will under no circumstances accept any responsibility for any aspect of the competition and games and all correspondence concerning them should be sent to Jade Games.

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

.... POSTCODE ....

LUDLOW DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY SHROPSHIRE

DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY has been running for some time now, and seems to be a popular part of PBM MAILBOX

★001 Adrian Neal
48 Marketstead Estate, Kirton, Boston, Lincolnshire PE20 1SL
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72 & 78; Capitol 15; Earthwood 52; Arcadia 6; Star Empires 1; Conquest*

★002 Jason French
78 Princes Road, Ellacombe, Torquay TQ1 1PA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 75 (Commander BLITAD)*

★003 Travis Smith
27 Sharmon Crescent, Braunstone Frith, Leicester LE3 6NW.
GAMES: *Starglobe 4 (SS Belle Julie)*

★004 Robert Darbyshire
22 Thornton Gate, Clevleys, Lancs, FY5 1JN
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 1 (Death Warriors); It's A Crime! 4 (Megacity Blues)*

★005 Stuart Millinship
17 Graveney Gardens, Arnold, Nottingham NG5 6QW
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 75 (Commander SHUTUN)*

★006 Mr G G Manganoni
109 Kings Road, Farncombe, Surrey GU7 3UE
GAMES: *Saturnalia; Crasimoff's World; Explorers of Orion; Lands of the Crimson Sun; Aes; Mark of Chaos; Untamed Land; Vesuvian*

★007 Mr C J McCarthy
39A Seaview Road, Liscard, Wallesey, Merseyside L45 4QN
GAMES: *Starglobe 1; Star Empires 1; Vorcon Wars 19; Saturnalia; Fleet Manoeuvres P107*

★008 Scott Macfarlane
2 Broomside Terrace, Costorphine, Edinburgh EH12 7LZ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60; Super Vorcon Wars 77*

★009 Paul Davidson
51 Waterloo Road, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland KA9 2AA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60 (Commander PEPISH); Arcadia; Conquest*

★010 Kev Wasey
9 Clarkson House, Maysoule Road, Battersea, London SW11 2BP
GAMES: *Earthwood 30*

★011 Ian Hudson
53 Deepmore Close, Alrewas, Nr Burton-upon-Trent, Staffs
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 65 (Commander PESTIB); Super Vorcon Wars 77 (Commander FRUGAD); World of Vengeance (Ian's Invincibles nr Bury St Edmunds)*

★012 Gareth Evans
4 Whitelands Road, Thatcham, Newbury, Berkshire RG13 4AR
GAMES: *Arcadia 6 (Egg Groinside)*

★013 Mike Adams
774 Holmefield Road, Liverpool, Merseyside LK9 3PQ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars; Conquest; It's A Crime! 4 (Priests)*

★014 David Lane
23 Florence Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham N92 5HR
GAMES: *Casus Belli 5; Player 16*

★015 Martin Higgins
Wallesey Road, Wallesey, Merseyside L44 2AG
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72; It's A Crime! 4*

★016 Cliff Frost
175 Queens Road, Leicester LE2 3FN
GAMES: *Saturnalia; Arcadia; Earthwood 44; Kings of Steel 17; Arcadia; It's A Crime!; Swords and Shields*

★017 Robin van den Yssel
Smaragdlaan 172, 2332 BX Leideh, Zuid Holland, Netherlands
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 72 (Commander TREBIN); Starglobe 3 (The Dutchman)*

★018 P Brunstan
Cae Mari Pwn House, Thomastown, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan, South Wales
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 2 (Death)*

★019 Steve Vickers
26 Swinton Court, Harrogate HG2 0BB
GAMES: *Soccer Star; Saturnalia; It's A Crime! 4; World of Chaos*

★020 Barnaby Dellar
11 Priory Grove, Stockwell, London SW8 2PD
GAMES: *Starglobe 4*

★021 Stephen Holt
27 Rosemary Road, Sprowston, Norwich, Norfolk NR7 8ER
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 61 (Commander BRIDER); It's A Crime! 4 (Fighting Uruk-Hai)*

★022 Kevin Pack
Walnut Tree Lodge, 9 Kings Meadow Lane, Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire NN9 8JE
GAMES: *Earthwood; Saturnalia; Starglobe 4; Orion's Finger; It's A Crime! 3; Casus Belli; Aes*

★023 Matthew Hanson
10 Denby Lane Crescent, Grange Moor, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF4 4EB
GAMES: *Starglobe 4 (SS Obsidian Fox); Arcadia*

★024 Gavin Marshall
36 Spur Road, Orpington, Kent BR6 0QL
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 71*

★025 Owen Whitehead
213 Park Road, Barnsley, S70 1QW
GAMES: *Aes ('Rillion' – E Side), Saturnalia (Grendl of the Web), Enchirodon (Brothers in Arms), It's A Crime (Brothers in Arms), From The Mouth of Hell (Elf), World of Chaos (Rillion Kerr), Soccer Star (Morning Star RS League)*

★026 Damian Manning
12 Warden Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B73 5SB
GAMES: *Starglobe (SS Alvon), It's A Crime (Merry Mob)*

★027 John Preen
12 Underdale Avenue, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 5DY
GAMES: *Starglobe Four (SS Broadsword of the Guild Alliance), Vorcon Wars 78 (Plonog)*

★028 John Kemp
9 Wold View, Caistor, Lincoln, LN7 6UU.
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 4 (New York Assassins), Arcadia 8 (Lord Centaurus at Jihad City, P27)*

★029 Milan Petronic
24 Dell Road, Kings Norton, Birmingham, B30 2HZ
GAME: *Arcadia 13 (Draug Dur)*

★030 JC Fowler
11 Beaconsfield Place, St Agnes, Cornwall, TR5 0SZ
GAMES: *Starglobe Three, Arcadia 8*

★031 Kevin Edwards
52 Woodlands Road, Irchester, Northants NN9 7BU
GAMES: *Vorcon 60, It's A Crime! 4, City of Strife.*

★032 Jason Cottrell
17 Back Lane, Barrington, Cambs, CB2 5RF
GAMES: *Saturnalia (Axil Taranus), Tyranny (P5)*

★033 Michael R Stannard
44 Harrington Street, Cleethorpes, South Humberside, DN35 7AZ
GAMES: *Arcadia 10 (Mordran the Unknown at Seven Springs City)*

★034Malcolm Sums
76 Mount Road, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1YF
GAMES: *Soccer Star (Kilmore Oilers), Bradley's Football (Houston Oilers)*

★035 Paul Davidson
51 Waterloo Road, Prestwick, Ayrshire, Scotland, KA9 2AA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 60 (Pepish), Arcadia 7 (Ped at Moriquendi City), Conquest (Anar Narion, maps 18/19)*

★036 S Davies
16 Clara Street, Ton-Pentre, Rhondda, Mid Glam, S. Wales, CF41 7HQ
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 4 (gang 315), Vorcon Wars 64 (Chotub)*

★037 S Wyatt
60 St Andrews Road, Shoeburyness, Essex, SS3 9JJ
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 73 (Prifun), Vorcon Wars 78 (Sathal), It's A Crime! 4 (Mercenaries), Kings of Steel (Woodland Alliance)*

★038 Richard Goff
20 Inglis Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3HU
GAME: *Arcadia 12 (player 17)*

★039 Jason Huggins
35 Garratts Lane, Banstead, Surrey, SM7 2ED
GAME: *Saturnalia (Vetrex)*

★040 Dean Stuart
26 Ullswater Avenue, West Auckland, Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 9LR
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 69 (THOPAL); Vorcon Wars 85 (TRIBER); Conquest; It's A Crime! 7 (Gang 267); St Valentine's Day Massacre*

★041 Gary Rooksby
42 Spinney Road, Keyworth, Nottinghamshire NG12 5LN
GAME: *It's A Crime! (Scorpions, Gang 497 in Game 8)*

★042 Andrew Middleton
3 Derwent Road, North Shields, Tyne And Wear NE30 3AH
GAMES: *It's A Crime!; Shattered World*

★043 David Patrick
18 Geoffreyson Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire RG4 7HS
GAMES: *Casus Belli 35 (Player 9); It's A Crime! 8 (Mutant Warriors); The Hunting*

★044 David Norman
7 King's Lane, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside L63 8NN
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 76 and 88; Kings of Steel 17*

★045 The Dark Young (one)
(*sic*)
59 Thornton Avenue, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 7XL
GAME: *Super Vorcon Wars 96 (Commander CRONVO)*

★046 Gareth Williams
17 Western Avenue, Brentwood, Essex CM14 4XR
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 4 (Perrigrines); Super Soccer (AC); Crasimoff's World (Death Squad)*

★047 Andi Watson
8 Earlswood Crescent, Kippax, near Leeds, West Yorkshire LS25 7JQ
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 9; Further Into Fantasy (Thai); Saturnalia*

★048 C Houghton
12 Tedder Road, Beaconside, Stafford ST16 3RA
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 83 (VARMER); Super Vorcon Wars 87 (GASTUG); Crasimoff's World; AE's (Western)*

★049 Patrick Walsh
36 Verney Road, Longley, Slough, Berkshire SL3 8NX
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 7 (Lynchmob); Soccer Star (Longley FC); Football League (Spurs)*

★050 David Brimley
41 Silverthorn Gardens, Chingford, London E4 8BW
GAME: *It's A Crime! 4 (The Unnameable)*

★051 Hugo Allen
38 Bathwick Hill, Bath, Avon BA2 6LD
GAMES: *Vorcon Wars 66 (THOGET); Vorcon Wars 75 (TRALIC); It's A Crime! 7 (Hill Street Scum)*

★052 Carver Tedstone
48 The Walk, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan CF47 8RR
GAMES: *Kings Of Steel 19 (KIR); Kingdom Of Orion 2 (Orissa); Casus Belli 38 (Player 15)*

★053 Neil Moulding
46 Park Avenue, Allerton Bywater, Castleford, West Yorkshire WF10 2AS
GAMES: *It's A Crime! 7 (Death Angels); Striker (Castleford Cosmos)*

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with Philippa Irving



SPECTRUM MANOEUVRES IN THE DARK

I PAID only a flying visit to The *PCW* Show and it was on a trade day, so I didn't meet many CRASH readers. I did, though, get the chance to talk to representatives of the strategy-producing software houses, and I was struck by the fact that the American exhibitors, who promote blockbusting and expensive disk-based strategy software, were much more voluble, enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their products than those who might give us Spectrum games. To be fair, I could find no representatives of PSS, Lothlorien or CCS, but I was disheartened to get no news of interesting forthcoming Spectrum strategy games. And I didn't even get a shot in MicroProse's flight-simulator machine.

In this issue and the last I've written only one game review; this month it's nothing more than a budget reissue of a golden oldie. A couple of months ago I was filling up space with reviews of compilations; it's not that I wish to decry compilations, but it would have been healthier had they been squeezed out by more urgent reviews of new releases.

Meanwhile, I receive parcelfuls of goodies for Manoeuvres, the strategy section in ZZAP!. Glossy, expensive, elaborately-packaged disk games, resplendent with fold-out maps and chunky rulebooks, arrive regularly every month.

What can be deduced from this – and from my experiences at The *PCW* Show – is that the American software market is very different from the British. The Commodore releases I received are all American imports, and strategy games take a large chunk of the market in the USA.

The average American software-buyer is older than the average British gamer, thus preferring a more complex and intellectually stimulating game. And computer-owners in the States have disk drives (the Spectrum is hardly known there), which makes an enormous difference.

Though a strategy game or wargame needs a good operating system, once it has that it can expand infinitely in all directions. Wargamers revel in any complexity which doesn't actually impair the playability of the game, but it's always limited by available memory. Beautiful tricks can be played with just 48K, and programmers who have all the space of a Commodore disk to rattle around in are demonstrably lazier and sloppier with their techniques; but if a programmer has any sense at all he can put a lot more units, maps, parameters and scenarios on a disk than in a little Spectrum.

We have the 128, but who's bothered to write specifically for the 128? Even expanded versions on the reverse side of 48K game tapes seem to be going out of fashion.

The Spectrum and its software have survived against some odds, and as I've said before I don't think flashier 8-bit machines like the Commodore can match the Spectrum when it comes to single-load arcade games. But the wargamer – and adventurer, indeed – has to face the fact that there are much more exciting things happening on machines with disk drives.

I'm sure that the recent paucity of releases has just been a temporary lull, or the result of a couple of software houses forgetting to send review copies, and that things will pick up again in the run-up to Christmas. But that doesn't alter the physical facts of computer nature.

ARENA

Producer: **Bug Byte**
Retail price: **£2.99**

Arena is quite an old game, once generously packaged in a video-style box with a glossy rulebook and now reissued in more modest garb at a budget price: the book has been reduced to a folded sheet. The game, however, is exactly the same.

The strategy game with the tacked-on arcade sequence is well known to wargamers. It's tempting to describe *Arena* as an arcade game with a tacked-on strategy section, but that wouldn't be doing justice to the fairly careful integration of styles – the static screens and the shooting-at-things screens.

The original rulebook says 'the arcade sequence is not designed as a glossy diversion which is irrelevant to the outcome of the game', and it's perfectly true. *Arena* is actually an easygoing version of that milestone in computer gaming history, *Battlezone* or *3D Tank Duel* or whatever else it called itself in its several guises.

This is the scenario. It is 2027. By the second half of the 20th century, man had abandoned all that dangerous and expensive warfare in favour of the medieval concept of trial by single combat. Each nation has a champion, and any dispute between countries is resolved by a duel in the Battle Arena. These duels have turned into major mass-media events, and the champions are held in popular esteem.

The English champion was killed last month in a duel against Wales, fought over the excess use of Welsh water by the English Midlands' megacities. And, for some reason not fully explored, you are the idiot who has volunteered to replace him. But before you can be allowed to defend King (presumably, by 2027) and country against French milk-importers and the like, you must prove your prowess in the Arena.

Upon this reasonably improbable scenario is hung a game which involves killing six enemy tanks with six tanks of your own; the Arena is a large area of landscape and road, much more extensive than the size of the screen display, in which the six-tank battle is fought.

At the start of the game, the player is given the choice of the tournament or the challenge version. The Challenge Game is described as a practice mode, and consists of a single bout of combat with a single batch of six tanks; if you eliminate the enemy's tanks in this mode, you've won and the game ends.

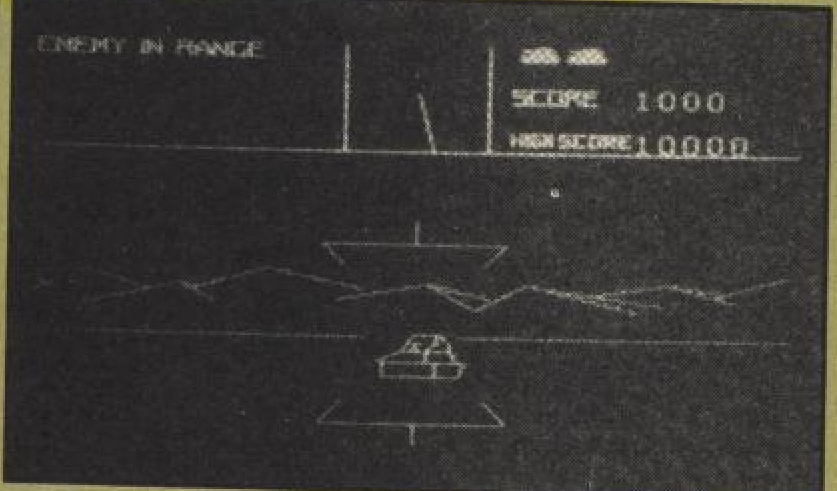
The Tournament Game, which is the 'real' game, puts *Arena* very firmly in the arcade camp. It's highly characteristic of arcade games that you simply can't win them, ever; defeat one wave and you're moved onto a slightly higher level. Such a philosophy gives little of that essential quality 'game incentive' (though others obviously don't miss it – the eternally incompletable *Space Invaders* was mildly popular), and a lot of the later, more sophisticated arcade games hold out a distant but definite prospect of winning in the end.

Arena is supposed to be about trial by single combat, and the open-endedness of its major mode makes nonsense of that. You should, if only after a lengthy ▶

and arduous series of combat rounds, be able to vanquish the enemy and retire from the ring with a wooden battle tank or at least a large cheque. But as it is, you are the only one of the combatants who can be defeated.

Another aspect doesn't make sense: you have simultaneous control of six tanks, though you can only give orders to one at a time. I don't believe the Champion is supposed to leap out of one tank, dash across the battlefield, and take charge of the next. And yet you can't be controlling the tanks remotely, because the previous Champion was killed in combat . . . perhaps it's unfair to be too literal about these things.

Having chosen the type of game, the player can then select one of four models of tank. The tanks are defined by three



► **The original: Quicksilva's *Battlezone***



characteristics: speed, armour and gun calibre. Each type has a special feature, too. Light tanks are fast, but are only lightly armoured and have a low gun calibre. Their major advantage is their mine-planting capability, and the enemy don't hesitate to plant mines if they're using light tanks – though in my experience they're also adept at running over them and blowing themselves up.

Heavy tanks are well-armoured and can do a lot of damage but move very slowly. Stealth tanks have moderate armour, speed and guns, but can't be detected by the enemy's radar and so can pop up unexpectedly. Hover tanks are very fast and can sail over usually obstructive features like rivers, and have light armour and a heavy gun.

Each model has a slightly different shape onscreen, which is clearly illustrated in the rules, so you can tell what to look out for.

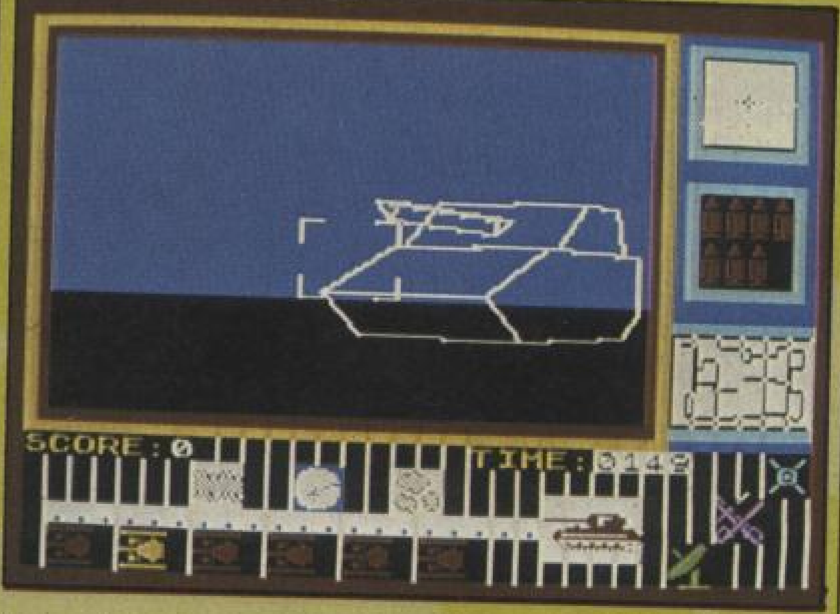
Unfortunately, though you can choose which type of tank you want you can't intermingle the tank types. This would give a greater variety of strategies. In the short Challenge Game you can choose the enemy's tank types as well, but in the Tournament Game the opponents make up their own mind or spring a different model on you with every wave.

The player starts with his six tanks lined up in a neat row at one edge of the Arena – to get things going they have to be moved out into combat. One tank can be selected at a time, and movement orders given to it. This is effected via the inevitable icons, which seems to make a simple process convoluted; first you have to select the tank, then the movement icon, then the type of movement you want – cross-country or sticking to the road – and only then may you use a cursor on the Arena screen itself to indicate the tank's destination.

If you choose road movement, the tank will trundle round the track very obediently. Ammunition stores are located by the roadside and enemy tanks tend to stick to the beaten track; they also lay their mines there.

You can give all the tanks movement orders like this, though there's little point in trying to keep track of all six at once. The game comes to an abrupt end if your master tank is destroyed, so it's wise to keep this one out of combat.

The object of *Arena* is of course to destroy the enemy's tanks. I found that the least energetic and most convenient way to do this was to sit a tank on the road quite close to an ammunition store, and wait for the enemy to come to me. The only problem is there's a time limit of a thousand seconds for each wave.



► ***Arena*'s contrived scenario is an excuse for a *Battlezone* tank clone**



BRIEFING

Look – no *Chaos* hints!

Instead, **Roger Pashby** of Mansfield agreed with my review of ***Samurai*** in Issue 39 except on one point; I found it impossible to win even on the easiest level, and he hasn't had the least difficulty. His strategy goes something like this:

When buying troops, ignore the peasants and get at least two mounted troops and two ninjas. The ninjas are especially important and ought to be guarded carefully, for they can win the game for you.

Defend bridges by plugging them with men, so that the number of attackers coming from the other side is reduced to two. If the combat is on open ground, line up your men, alternating foot soldiers, mounted men and ninjas. Recess ninjas between troops so that they are safe from hand-to-hand attack but can let fly their shuriken at the enemy.

Sometimes the enemy trap themselves in the southwest corner of the map towards the end of the game, thanks to *Samurai*'s unintelligent movement routine. They're easy to pick off with strategically-positioned ninjas.

Using these tactics, Roger claims he has only ever lost one game. He is, however, unable to tell me the function of the mysterious inaccessible icon. I'm still waiting for someone to enlighten me.

I wasn't very impressed by Martech's ***Armageddon Man*** (reviewed in Issue 44), and thought it was one of those impossible-to-complete games, so I was surprised to receive a letter from someone who has actually succeeded: **Richard Pitman** has managed to rid the world of nuclear weapons and gain a score of 100%.

The first thing to do in the game is to position spy satellites over the borders of countries till you have the best cover possible. One satellite can, if well-placed, watch over three countries at once. It's imperative to put an SDI satellite over Japan right away, as it's nearly always the first country to be attacked. The others should be concentrated over the Middle East.

Move your UNN forces to countries with abundant resources, and distribute food and technology to poorer nations till everybody has their fair share.

Routinely send letters every week to all countries telling them to improve their relations with each other. And as soon as you start the game send letters to every country to tell them to reduce their nuclear arsenals. If any country is unwilling, sit your UNN troops on it for awhile. Gradually, the nations of the world will disarm. The sooner you can get them to do so, the sooner the risk of war will be reduced.

Always reprimand countries for antisocial behaviour like ambassador-assassinating, embassy-attacking and launching nuclear weapons.

Never disagree with a country. Ignore it instead.

Richard promises disarmament and world harmony within 30 years if you follow these tips. If only it were that easy in real life!



Whatever you do, you'll soon spot an enemy tank gliding towards yours. If the tanks are scattered all over the screen then the first you know about it may be a scrolling message informing you that tank 3 is under attack. Tank 3 will be destroyed undefended unless you deal with it – your tanks can't fire back on their own initiative – so it's imperative to select it as quickly as you can and move on to the battle screen.

It is on this central screen that *Arena* comes out of the closet and proves itself a rather gentle *Battlezone*.

Quicksilva's *Battlezone*, reviewed in CRASH Issue 11, was an arcade game first, and found its way to the rubber keyboard as one of the first animated wireframe 3-D games. In it you trundle around a surrealist landscape in agonizing slow motion, surrounded by odd purposeless items of scenery, till you encounter another tank creeping along the ground; then, pushing through treacle, you centre him in your sights and with infinite slowness dispatch a small box which makes its leisurely way toward the target and perhaps causes it to explode carefully and gradually.

It is one of the slowest games ever, and it was successful enough to spawn clones which copied it unashamedly. In *Arena* we have this classic reproduced in loving detail. It isn't quite as slow as the original, but it certainly isn't lightning-fast. We even have the blank surroundings interrupted by the occasional deformed-looking tree.

The sequence isn't very difficult, either. Two or three shells even from a light tank finish off the opponent before he has time to turn round and fire at you. The danger lies in getting caught between several tanks, and firing at your own if you have two in the same vicinity.

The screen display has the polished and pleasant assurance of an arcade game. A large window depicts a small portion of the Arena, well-drawn, with terrain features (which don't play a very significant role) clearly identifiable. There are four different maps which come up randomly, and the essential ammunition dumps are on different places in the road circuit of each.

The circuit is shown in miniature beside the map, and the known positions of tanks appear as small radar dots. Arranged decoratively around the main screen are icons for operating the game and a display which shows how many rounds of ammunition the currently-selected tank has left.

The presentation of *Arena* is attractive and pleasant, and though there's not much depth to the game, as a structured version of *Battlezone* it is reasonably entertaining.

Presentation 80%
The onscreen appearance is pleasant, the icons no more annoying than icons usually are, and the scrolling smooth

Graphics 81%
The map graphics and the wireframe graphics of the arcade sequence perform well

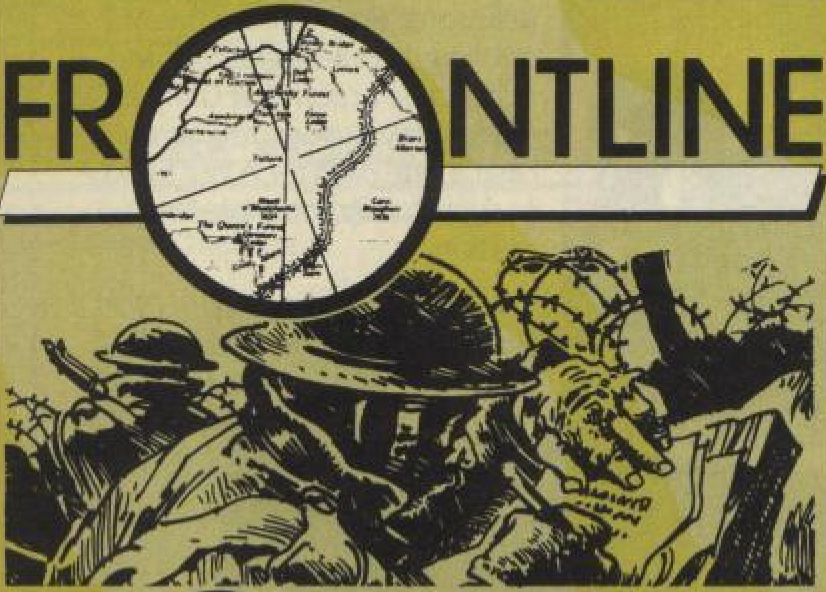
Rules 70%
Though condensed from the original edition of the rulebook, the rules still set out the salient points and illustrate screen symbols

Authenticity 45%
Barely a consideration – the scenario is improbable, the game makes no attempt to play it out, and the tanks scarcely behave like tanks

Playability 65%
In a game which is really an arcade game slightly slowed down, there isn't quite enough happening to hook interest

OVERALL 67%
Not bad at a budget price

FRONTLINE



FORUM

LINES OF BATTLE

The majority of my letters this month were replying to the Issue 44 letter from Robert Lines, who expressed in strong terms his moral objections to wargames. The correspondents disagreed with his views, in equally strong terms . . .

Dear Philippa
I, like Robert Lines, am not a 'wargamer'. Hopefully that is where all similarities end.

To say that it was the constant glorification of war that 'sent millions upon millions of men to their deaths' and that these men were 'merely attempting to survive' is most insulting. We may not know the 'pain, anger, sadness, horror, frustration and sheer evil of war', but you only have to see the atrocities committed at Auschwitz and Belsen to realise that there was something worth fighting for. The freedom to hold your own beliefs and live your own life is basic to any civilisation, and if going to war is the only way to preserve these rights, then that is the way life is . . .

In your forward, you refer to 'strategy games', and to the pleasure of beating the computer with a good strategy. Perhaps it is this that wargamers enjoy, rather than the 'how many people can I kill' of Mr Lines.

Andrew Wilson, North Chailey

Dear Philippa
Firstly, war, in fighting for ones rights and beliefs, is not always wrong. In the First and Second World Wars, the German armed forces and her allies attacked Great Britain and her allies who rallied together and fought back; this reaction was morally right. I am sure that you would have let the Nazis walk all over your face without reacting (except maybe complaining a bit).

Secondly, how dare you tarnish the names of those who fought and died for their beliefs and what was right by saying that they were not brave? Yes, they were frightened and often led by bigots, but nevertheless they still carried on fighting and I for one am very proud of them. I am also surprised at the way you call them all conscripted as a vast proportion were volunteers.

Thirdly, don't lecture us on legalised killing. If it were not right it would not be legal. When someone does something wrong they must be punished in proportion to the crime, no more and certainly no less. This system is used in all stable legal systems and religions. You seem to have the wrong idea about cadet forces also, in my air cadet squadron we are taught how to fire a rifle but the first thing we were told and retold every lesson is NEVER POINT A GUN AT ANYONE . . .

D A Schofield, Tamworth

Dear Philippa
The thing that upset me most about the letter was the following passage: 'We are told every 11th November that these men were patriots, that they were brave. THEY WERE NOT.' Who the hell does this insensitive, inhuman halfwit think he is?

My own grandfather joined the army in the First World War . . . He was 15 when he enlisted and he knew he might get killed. Obviously this Lines person does not appreciate what bravery that took. Later in the war my grandfather won the Military Medal for saving the life of his captain by running into 'no-man's land' and dragging him back. My grandfather did not have to do this. He was not 'merely attempting to survive', he risked his life for another's. He was lucky, other's weren't – but all who fought there were brave. COWARDS like Lines and myself are not really fit to criticise anything these men did. Perhaps this Lines person would like to come round to my house and explain to my grandfather's daughter and her husband how much of a lonely, unhappy frightened man my grandfather was . . .

Christopher Cooper, Leeds

Dear Philippa
Being a wargamer, unlike Robert Lines, I feel more qualified to comment on the subject.

War is morally right when people's freedom, loves, lands and lives are at stake. Past wars are a guide to present and future generations not to wage war. To forget the horrors of war is both dangerous and naive.

Authentic wargaming like *Theatre Europe* gives the players a better understanding of human conflict than most books and films. In wargaming, the so-called good guys don't always win and when the casualty figures come pouring in a sense of loss, guilt and failure prevail, thus keeping alive the hopelessness of war in people with no personal experience of such carnage . . .

Terry Goater, Gosport

Finally, I'd like to thank the three people who have kindly supplied me with copies of Chaos: ***Ian Harrison*** *of Llandudno,* ***Damian Zablocki*** *of West Bridgford, and* ***Paul Fulcher*** *of Thetford, whose letter started it all. I am now abundantly swamped in Chaos, and have no excuse if future listings I publish don't work.*

PI



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February 1985
Issue No. 13

Released on
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Generally known as 'The Spectrum Kid', this cover used colour more ambitiously than any of its predecessors. Oliver was keen on painting an almost abstract subject, the wondrous thrill of a newcomer to the Spectrum (there were always many more after Christmas), wide open to its magic and mystery. It's a simple piece of symbolism, the Spectrum colours animating the otherwise grey, ethereal figure – yet the delicacy of the painting seems to illuminate the whole cover so that it adds up to more than the sum of its parts; there's really nothing here tied to any game.

Even game maps had become the subject of exclusivity! Witness the cover flash for *Psytraxx* from The Edge. Exclusive maps were, and still are, a rather daft notion. But by this point magazines would slap 'exclusive' over anything that could be drawn within hours of a preview copy's arrival to beat a rival magazine's carefully negotiated 'official' map.

The good turn Elite unwittingly did CRASH, which I mentioned earlier in the CRASH history, was concerned with its game *Airwolf*. This was to be a TV tie-in in reverse. Elite sent the Birmingham-based Central TV news desk a press release about the youthfulness of *Airwolf*'s programmer (actually Richard Wilcox, young, but not quite the spring chicken the release made him out to be!). Central rang Roger Kean to double-check whether this was commonplace, and whether *Airwolf* actually was a hit game. Roger told the researcher that he would have to consult his school-age reviewing team, a statement calculated to arouse Central's interest.

The thought that a bunch of mere schoolkids was passing judgement on games which would then affect large companies' sales – and all this from the obscure town of Ludlow – was irresistible.

Next day, a four-man Central TV crew arrived in Ludlow to interview Matthew Uffindell, Ben Stone, Robin Candy and Roger Kean. The TV reporters wanted to have the CRASH reviewers playing *Airwolf* and chatting about it. Unfortunately it was left to Robin to say why he thought it was a hit, and because he was the only person on the team who really didn't like the game much he was largely cut out from the edited programme, as was *Airwolf*. But CRASH appeared the following evening, December 19, on Central News in a five-minute piece.

Also that month Legend gave us *The Great Space Race*, leaving most reviewers undecided as to whether it was the biggest disappointment of all time or the biggest hoax. Large shipments hit the shelves before the reviews – and then the sales died. Sometimes, justice does prevail.

All magazine publishers were concerned that the Government would levy 15% VAT on magazines in the April Budget. Periodicals and books had always been zero-rated, and there were gloomy prognostications that such a tax would mean most magazines would have to increase their cover price to stay afloat financially, and thus lose readers. All this led Roger to predict in his editorial the death of some computer titles.

In the event magazines were left alone by VAT, but several titles would still close, as the computer-magazine market, safely sailing for three years, entered a period of great change in the wake of CRASH's quirky success.

An early software casualty of 1985 was Fantasy, whose *Backpacker's Guide To The Universe* had failed to hit the mark. Fantasy released *Drive In*, a reasonably-rated yet nevertheless disappointingly derivative game, and then, as everyone awaited news of the sequel to *Backpacker's*, simply vanished from the face of Cheltenham, leaving debts and confusion.

On the brighter side, Hewson scored a Smash with *Technician Ted*, a surprise to many outsiders, who considered the game nothing more than a competent *Jet Set Willy* clone. The CRASH team just loved it, though. Of course there was also *Airwolf* (Candy excepted) and Firebird's first full-price (Gold Range) game, *Buggy Blast* – a 3-D shoot-'em-up bettered since, but impressive then.

Derek had some thrills too: *Doomdark's Revenge* proved to be even better than its predecessor, *Lords Of Midnight*, making programmer Mike Singleton one of the most praised people in the business.

And I shouldn't avoid recalling that, to our shame, this issue also reviewed Jon Ritman's *Match Day*, failing to Smash it – we've never been allowed to forget that! And Robin Candy's never forgotten Issue 13 either, for this was his first as Playing Tipster, complete with cute little curly-haired photograph. He loved the fame, hated the photo and it has dogged him since – serves him right too.



CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

No.14 MARCH 1985

85p

EXCLUSIVE!

EVERYONE'S A WALLY

—LIFE OF WALLY—

mikro-gen

EXCLUSIVE!

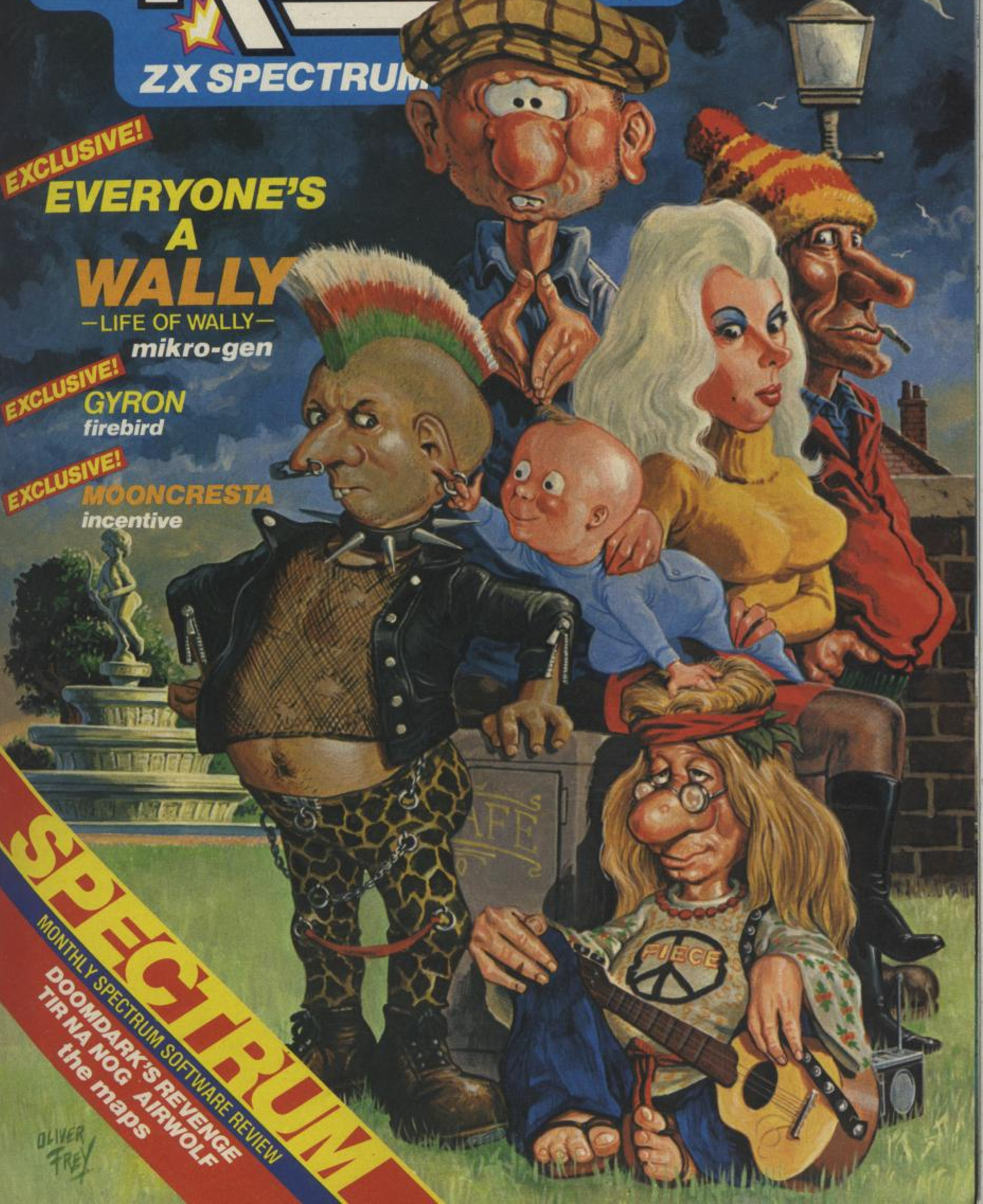
GYRON

firebird

EXCLUSIVE!

MOONCRESTA

incentive



SPECTRUM

MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

DOOMDARK'S REVENGE

TIR NA NOG AIRWOLF

the maps

March 1985
Issue No. 14

Released on
February 28th

In most respects, Issue 14's was the first CRASH cover to be absolutely tied to a particular game, Everyone's A Wally. *Though it's not his favourite working style, once in a while Oliver likes to get away from the action-packed, atmospheric mode and do something a touch more comic, and the six characters in Mikro-Gen's arcade adventure offered the month's best opportunity. The picture with its bright, brash colours is in complete contrast to the previous month's. Then as now, Oliver always tried to keep readers guessing what the next issue's cover surprise will be . . .*

Secret negotiations had been taking place with Chris Anderson, Editor of publisher VNU's *Personal Computer Games*, and at the start of February they came to fruition: he joined Newsfield to edit a new magazine for the Commodore 64 to be called *Sprite & Sound*. Shortly afterwards *PCG* ceased publication as part of VNU's planned reduction in computer titles. And just weeks after a jingoistic blast in the press from *Big K* editor Tony Tyler about the qualities computer magazines needed to survive, IPC axed his magazine after not quite a year of existence.

The dramatic changes in the outside world were reflected in CRASH Towers. The earlier financial struggles during the lean times had eased as CRASH's circulation rose, so the company could afford to hire some more staff to ease demands on Roger Kean's time. In this issue, Graeme Kidd's name first appeared as Assistant Editor, while shortly afterwards Jeremy Spencer joined CRASH to look after software and the reviews. The art department, too, expanded; Gordon Druce, now Art Director of CRASH, started as a humble paste-up artist to help David Western, who was still responsible for the photography – and had the added burden of the forthcoming Commodore magazine to cope with.

CRASH ended up on telly again, this time on TV South West's Saturday *Freeze Frame* programme. TSW wanted Matthew Uffindell and Robin Candy to discuss how CRASH reviewed games. It meant a trip to the Plymouth studios, a nerve-racking wait of four hours and then 15 minutes before the cameras. The two lads carried it off admirably, able to be blasé now that TV appearances were becoming commonplace!

Giving us one of those exclusives, Firebird brought early copies of a game called *Hedron* to be reviewed. The only change Firebird made before releasing it was to the title: *Hedron* was renamed *Gyron* – a fortunate alteration when, many weeks later, a rival magazine quietly laid charges of piracy at CRASH's door. Illegal copies of *Gyron* had found their way into the market before the game's late-spring release date. Our security was understandably called into question by Firebird, but we were able to point to our early copy, still with its original *Hedron* loading screen; recovered pirate copies had a *Gyron* loading screen. The rival magazine made no further comment.

Gyron, a 3-D maze game of great originality, requiring fast thinking and joystick dexterity, received a well-deserved Smash, as did Mikro-Gen's *Everyone's A Wally* for improving yet again on the Wally Week saga. Adventure International caught a Smash in the sticky web of *Spiderman*, second in its Questprobe series from Marvel Comics and American adventure-programming whiz Scott Adams. Classic game themes earned Incentive and Bubble Bus Smashes too – Incentive for a licensed conversion of *Moon Cresta*, an unusual departure for the software house best known for its text adventures. But the shoot-'em-up was lovingly adapted for the Spectrum and proved that a well-implemented alien-zapper could still be a winner.

Previously, Bubble Bus had only been a Commodore 64 house, but with Steve Crow's *Wizard's Lair* it had a Spectrum winner, and the game went on to be converted for the 64 where it became an early Sizzler in ZZAP! 64 . . .

ZZAP! . . . ? Well, no-one really liked *Sprite & Sound*. Newsfield was expected to come up with something as sharp-sounding and short as CRASH, so in the end we settled on ZZAP!, adding the 64 as an afterthought. But as events were soon to prove there was nothing 'afterthought' about ZZAP!

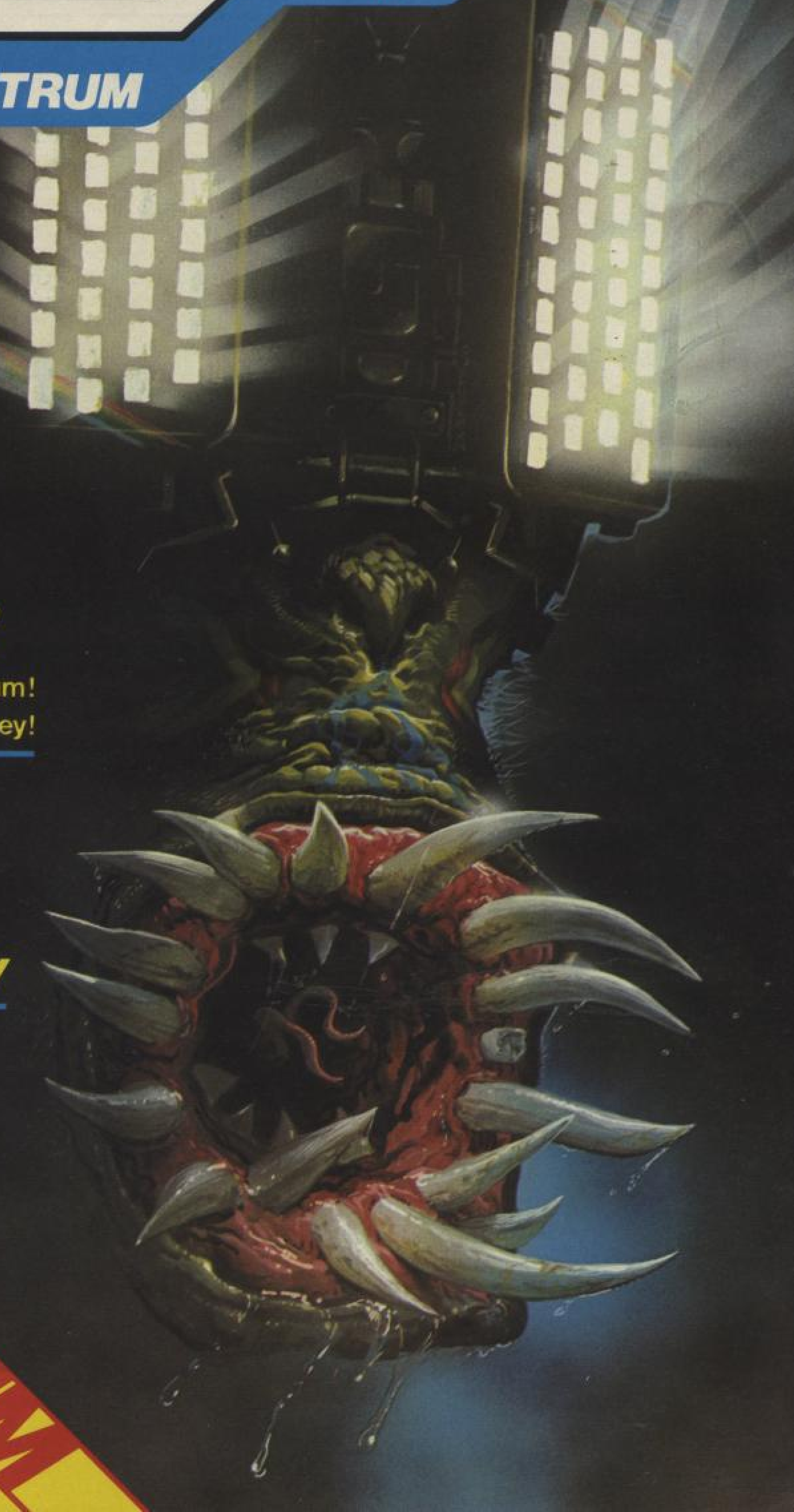


CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

No.15 APRIL 1985

85p



Grab a Bite of Britain's Brightest Spectrum Games Mag and chew on £5'000 worth of Prizes!

PLUS! Win a PRICELESS album! Win a pop gig with Chris Sievey!

Great Scott!

Adventureland Guru revealed

The Sinclair Story

Beginning a four part series

SPECTRUM

MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

BACKPACKER'S

TECH TED

the maps

April 1985
Issue No. 15

Released on March 28th

After the Christmas cover and those of the two previous issues, Oliver wanted to get back to the feeling generated by Issue One's picture, a strong, grotesque, large-face image. The impact of this technohorror is undeniable, working even more effectively when you compare its organic, slavering toothiness and the multifaceted, fly-like eyes. But a closer examination of the brilliant eyes reveals them to be illuminated Spectrum keyboards, the famous colours just picked out in a refracted flare at the bottom left. This painting was not related to any known game.

In March we had reviewed Richard Shepherd's *Ski Star 2000*, a sports simulation by Pete Cooke, remarkable for having a downhill-course construction kit and its use of icons – it was the first game to really implement this new 'user-friendly' technique. Sadly, it was to be Shepherd's last release. The text-adventure market had shrunk financially and Shepherd's almost total dependence on the genre left the business vulnerable. Only those with powerful adventure product could hope to succeed: houses like Level 9, for instance.

In April stalwart Micromega came up with the disappointing *Day In The Life*, a spoof on Sir Clive Sinclair. It proved to be Micromega's last game, and the label was absorbed into its commercial-programming parent company as quietly as a ship sliding under the waves.

April's issue presented more features than had been possible before. Articles on Mizar, Scott Adams, pop/computer star Chris Sievey and the regular cover-artist slot showed clearly the effect of having more writers on the staff. Two new regular sections appeared: Tech Niche, soon to attract the talents of Simon N Goodwin, and my Merely Mangram preview column – recognition of the increasing importance to readers of early games news, and made possible by Robin taking over the Playing Tips.

But we effectively lost a reviewer at this point; after 15 months of unremitting critical game-playing, Matthew Uffindell felt he had burned out. He had borne the brunt, writing a comment on every game ever reviewed, and now he felt it was time to concentrate on his other CRASH job up in the art department, the technical side of making printers' halftone pictures and the rudimentary film-planning techniques which he and Roger Kean were developing. Though Matthew remained on the masthead as a contributing writer for several more months, he handed over his function to the very capable Jeremy Spencer, coming down to editorial thereafter only on rare occasions.

For three years the magazine *Leisure Electronics Trade* had organised a computer-entertainment trade show, and at the start of this issue their biggest show yet was held at London's Olympia. It was a huge success, though at the time no-one knew it would be the last and that before the year was out *LET* would cease publication. At the show a tall, bespectacled young man wearing an atrociously-coloured Hawaiian shirt under a dark jacket approached Roger Kean and announced himself to be a runner-up in the CRASH Reviewers' Competition. It was John Minson, then setting out to break into journalism. What he wanted was an opportunity to write for CRASH, and soon enough he would do so.

Also at the *LET* Show, exhibiting for the first time, was System 3. Its cheerfully aggressive proprietor Mark Cale had his first Spectrum product almost ready and wanted a Smash for it. He got the game in just before the issue closed for press, and *Death Star Interceptor* was a Smash. So was US Gold's *Raid Over Moscow*, the CRASH team happily oblivious to the controversy raging in both trade and consumer press about the game's dubious political xenophobia.

An unusual hit came from a company better known for utilities than games: Romantic Robot, which produced *Wriggler*. Jeremy fell in love with the cute graphics, but it was Robin Candy's favourable decision on playability that made it a Smash. Everyone, however, considered *Alien 8* to be marvellous despite the climate of opinion on Ultimate's releases and their continuing similarities. The Ultimate debate would dominate my letters pages for ages, but I still think *Alien 8* deserved its accolade.



CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

No.16 MAY 1985

95p



SPORTS SCENE

Last gasp of a dying genre?

CHRIS PASSEY rounds up the contenders...

Plink! Plonk! Beep!

Sounding out Spectrum Music Software

SPECTRUM

MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

OVER £4,000 TO WIN!

Robin Candy's Playing Tips

Maps of Underwurlde · Bruce Lee
Everyone's a Wally · Sabre Wulf

May 1985
Issue No. 16

Released on
April 25th

It had been decided to run a sports-simulation feature in May's issue for some time, so a topic for the cover wasn't in question, but Oliver's problem was how to portray the subject without using the trite picture-montage method. In the event, he turned the idea on its head, creating this startling montaged footballer, his body entirely made up of recognisable sporting equipment, booting a spaceship toward the onlooker. Perhaps what's most remarkable is that the picture was painted in only three to four hours while Oliver fitted in his new commitment to ZZAP!.

After a few verbal run-ins with the rival publisher of *Your Spectrum* (now *Your Sinclair*) we had some innocent, esoteric fun on the cover by referring to the sports games article as: 'Sports Scene – Last gasp of a dying genre?' (The publisher of *Your Spectrum* was called Sportscene Publications.) A rather more virulent form of such fun was shortly to get CRASH into a lot of trouble, but more of that later . . .

Despite the time of year – start of the summer slump – software held up really well, and there was a lot of it about. The six Smashes were very varied: two from the arcades for US Gold, *Bruce Lee* (the first of the kick-'em-ups, except perhaps Bug-Byte's *Kung Fu*) and *Spy Hunter* were great fun, Hewson's Steve Turner repeated his successful 3-D adventure formula with a return to Avalon in *Dragon Torc* and made it even more fluent, Level 9 predictably delighted Derek Brewster with the unusual *Emerald Isle*, the name of Imagine reappeared under its new owners, Ocean, with the interesting simulation *World Baseball*, and Melbourne House offered a mixture of brain-teaser and 3-D action in *Starion*.

There's a story attached to the last. Paula Byrne, then at Melbourne House, came up to Ludlow to show the CRASH team an early version of the game. Supposed to arrive for lunch, she finally appeared at four o'clock, worn out by the drive and having lost her way several times. As you can imagine, Paula wasn't in the best of moods, but it worsened when she opened up the cassette case to find that the tape inside was not only an old Commodore 64 game, it wasn't even by Melbourne House! We received *Starion* by post a few days later. The story has remained a secret till now, but, Paula, the statutory 30 years is too long to wait to reveal the truth!

It's interesting to note that during 1985 the average price of Spectrum games had already risen to £6.95 and, in many cases, £7.95, an increase of some £2 over the two years 1983-85. Today's prices reflect a further rise of £2, again over roughly two years. The major exceptions then were Ultimate at the top end of the scale with £9.99 games, and Mastertronic, Firebird and Atlantis at the lower end, all of which have maintained their budget structures of £1.99 and £2.99.

And at a budget price John Minson was given his first tentative try-out for CRASH, turning in some news items, while in the fledgling Tech Niche section another new contributor appeared: Jon Bates. Composer and computer musicologist, he reviewed nine music programs, further expanding the scope of CRASH.

After their TV tie-in deals *Fall Guy*, *Dukes Of Hazzard* and *Airwolf*, Elite popped up with one of the oddest endorsement deals of the day, the not unsuccessful horse-racing game *Grand National*. (Elite was about to go one better and produce a tire tie-in with Dunlop for the appalling *911TS*). Another, and less successful, tie-in was Quicksilva's *Fantastic Voyage* based on the 20th Century Fox film. Computer games hadn't quite matured enough to deal with the big boys of Hollywood, and *Fantastic Voyage* was an old hat film by some years. But this situation was changing; soon tied-in games would compete with their film sources for simultaneous release.

While we were working on CRASH, down in Yeovil, Somerset, where Chris Anderson lived and the ZZAP! 64 writers were based, the new magazine's first issue was being completed. Newsfield was about to double its production base.




A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.17 JUNE 1985
95p
CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM
PREVIEW
FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD
OCEAN
PROFILE
DENTON DESIGNS
THE TEAM BEHIND SHADOWFIRE FRANKIE GIFT FROM THE GODS
=BANG!
SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
YOUR SPECTRUM
Fit for the Scrapheap?
Where to go for rescue...

May 1985
Issue No. 17

Released on
May 30th

Ocean's Frankie Goes To Hollywood *was the obvious cover choice for the month; the band members didn't appear in the game, but Oliver was determined they would on the cover. For his departure point he picked the kitsch theme from the* Power Of Love *promo video where they all appear as gilded cherubs around an ornate picture frame. It was then a question of fitting in some of the elements of the game. This, perhaps the most unusual CRASH cover, was also the most accomplished representation of a particular game Oliver had done to date.*

Once again, we took a little dig at *Your Spectrum* on the cover flash, this time in a reference to computer repair shops: 'Is Your Spectrum fit for the Scrapheap?' But the real issue of the month was Denton Designs, the talented group of programmers who had started at the old Imagine. Now, part-financed by Ocean and contractually supported by Beyond, they had formed a nucleus of games designers and programmers. Denton Designs was the most visible tip of a new development in the games-software industry.

The back-bedroom days were over; larger and more financially powerful companies like Ocean, US Gold, Argus and British Telecom were taking over smaller independents who had survived from the pioneering days. There was a more professional approach. Programmers no longer wanted to bother with marketing and distribution, programming was their strength, and so a number of development groups were springing up, people who didn't want to spend time selling their work but who also didn't want to be part of a large corporation. They were the new software contractors, and none received as much publicity as Denton Designs.

Gift From The Gods for Ocean was Denton Designs's first released game; in this issue we extensively previewed *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*, but it was *Shadowfire* for Beyond, the game Denton Designs first contracted for, which was reviewed. Looking back, *Shadowfire* actually lacked content, but its shallow qualities were well disguised by the novel icon presentation. Pete Cooke's *Ski Star 2000* may have been the first game to use icons, but *Shadowfire* was the first to base the entire gameplay and control on these graphic devices.

In fact, Robin Candy found *Shadowfire* so easy he'd completed it on the second day after its arrival and was able to prove the point in this issue's Playing Tips!

Much more enjoyably frustrating, though decidedly without the evident programming cleverness of *Shadowfire*, was US Gold's *Tapper*, a beer-swilling experience of keeping bar customers satisfied that defied everyone's arcade abilities. It just made a Smash because it was irresistible!

If there had been any doubt the month before about the demise of sports simulations as a genre (and history has certainly proved it to be an ill-founded doubt), then New Generation's endorsed *Jonah Barrington's Squash* helped put fears on the shelf, though few reviewers thought the presentation had advanced much on Psion's *Match Point*.

What it did have was synthesized speech for the scoring (*Death Star Interceptor* had also had a go at that), which prompted Matthew, in a rare reappearance as a reviewer, to say it was difficult to hear without his 'famdabidozy-super-blaster radio amplifier' – a precursor of the 128, no doubt.

Derek had a couple of Smashes in *Witch's Cauldron* from Mikro-Gen, an adventure using Wally Week-style graphics, and the excellent *Runestone* from Games Workshop, whose graphics showed it wasn't only Mike Singleton who could provide 'landscaping' techniques.

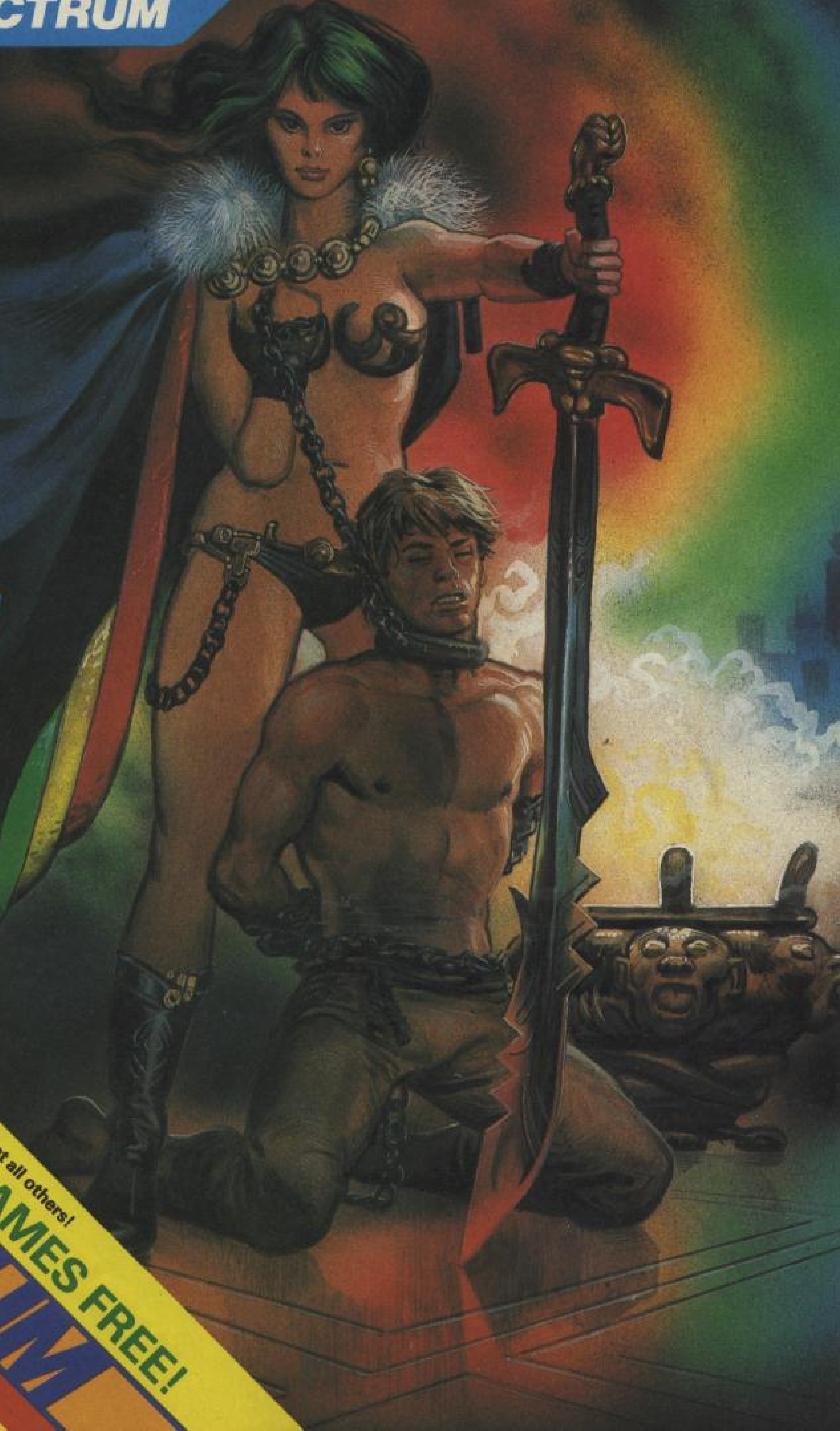
At this moment a crisis arose. Though Newsfield's new Commodore title ZZAP! 64 had taken off extremely well, production problems were emerging with its editorial base being far away in Yeovil. Chris Anderson had provided a marvellous product, but he didn't want to move up to Ludlow, whereas Newsfield's management wanted the magazine in its own premises. There was a head-on clash which resulted in Chris leaving the company and the ZZAP! team arriving in Ludlow in the middle of June as we started on the July issue. We all had to move round to make room . . .



A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.18 JULY 1985
95p

CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM



Prisoner of the evil sorceress in...

DUN DARACH

GARGOYLE

2

US GOLD OR OCEAN GAMES FREE!

The Subscription offer to beat all others!

SPECTRUM

MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

PRIZES GALORE!

IN OUR COMPETITIONS

OLIVER FREY

June 1985
Issue No. 18

Released on June 27th

The Dun Darach *cover painting caused a fair stir – some readers reported seeing the magazine on newsagents' top shelves – though the subject matter is really only a fond reworking of many a pulp SF/sword-and-sorcery theme. As usual, Oliver did not move far away from Spectrum references either; note the rainbow colouring of Skar's cloak and the air around her. Perhaps the erotic connotations of having a man in bondage to a woman, even if a sorceress, were too much for some chauvinist CRASH readers, who would feel the same about Issue 31 with its Hannah Smith cover.*

A dark month for the software business: confirmation arrived that Fantasy had definitely gone, and the financially ailing independent Micromania was being forced into liquidation, unable to withstand the loss of payments after its distributor, Tiger, collapsed. It seemed a shame; never a frontrunner, Micromania had nevertheless produced a handful of interesting games, last but not least being *Project Future*, a Smash in Issue 14.

The biggest failure, however, was that of Bug-Byte, which went into receivership during June. Bug-Byte was founding father of the home-computer game and many well-known individuals and several software houses had sprung from the Liverpool company. To be fair, the quality of Bug-Byte's products had dropped; still, it was a sad surprise to many, causing almost as many fears that the end was nigh as had Imagine's disintegration.

But, like Imagine, Bug-Byte would be resurrected: Argus, unable to confirm a merger deal before Bug-Byte went into receivership, later purchased it from the receiver to use as a budget label.

And, to paraphrase, in the midst of death there is life: up came Mirrorsoft. After a short and low-profile history of educational software, Mirrorsoft suddenly produced *Dynamite Dan*, the ever so attractive *Jet Set Willy* clone which because of its playability, clever map and fiendish difficulty well deserved the Smash it received.

It was a good month for quality games, in fact. *Dun Darach* left Cuchulainn fan Robin Candy in paroxysms of delight as he reviewed Gargoyle's third game (and pleased Roger Kean, because he had a credit in the inlay for thinking up the idea of numbering all the houses, a suggestion he had offered Gargoyle's Greg Follis during the *LET* Show). Only recently established on the 64, Palace Software converted its Commodore hit *Cauldron* to the Spectrum and had it Smashed, while Mikro-Gen revived familiar graphics and puzzles with *Herbert's Dummy Run*, in which Wally Week took more of a back seat as his toddler son Smashed up the shop.

What these very different games had in common was that they were new neither in ideas nor in gameplay but their implementation was exemplary. Programmers were now concentrating on providing a long, complex game with large, densely detailed graphics and decent helpings of humour. None of these virtues applied to Domark's big game, though. For the majors, fighting a battle for the best licences going, it must have been galling to see Domark pick up James Bond in *A View To A Kill*, especially as the multipart game proved a great disappointment.

How could I know that in another year, the CRASH enthusiast whose Forum heading I used in this issue – a 'desperate art student' who'd sent his drawing to the Bug Box – would be working for Newsfield? Was I to blame for Richard Eddy?

ZZAP! staff writers Gary Penn and Julian Rignall arrived in Ludlow during June, halfway through work on their issue. This was the moment when Roger Kean, perforce of necessity, took over editorship of ZZAP! and relinquished his role on CRASH. It seemed to many readers a traitorous act from the man who had become so firmly associated with the Spectrum, but in fact Roger continued to keep an eye on the magazine he had helped found a year and a half earlier, as Graeme Kidd moved up from Assistant Editor to Editor.

In the battle for circulation – and CRASH's was rising fast, threatening the longer-established titles – it seemed to be vital to be seen to be first with the reviews. CRASH staff were increasingly exercised over rival magazines getting to review some games before we did – one magazine, now defunct, appeared to rate on the basis of seeing unfinished copies. It was aggravating, and the situation was about to boil over spectacularly . . .



A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 19 AUGUST 1985
95p

CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM



At last the 64K Spectrum!

MIKRO-PLUS

16, 48 now 64K of Program Power

MIKRO-GEN

Frankie Comes to Ludlow

And gets a full review...

Super Sub Offer
HALF PRICE HARDWARE!

SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

Great Pull-Out poster

Summertime Sports Software Scene

Grab a piece of the action!

August 1985
Issue No. 19

Released on July 25th

The Spectrum surfer cover has some things in common with Issue Eight's, the man diving into a pool: the cool blues of water, the surreal use of a computer as a surfboard. It heralded the arrival of the Spectrum+ at the height of summer. The primary task of a magazine cover is to stand out from the plethora of other titles on a newsagent's shelves. When it came to using colour, strangely juxtaposed images and dynamic composition, Oliver Frey's CRASH cover pictures were, and still are, among the best. They always make an immediate impact.

Surfers dice with danger in their sport; the cover was an apt symbol for the issue. In a fit of self-righteousness – which to be honest had always lain just under the surface of CRASH's editorial stance, sometimes threatening to break out but usually contained – new Editor Graeme Kidd and his small team set aside four pages to lampoon rival magazine *Sinclair User*. And in a wave of what proved to be ill-judged enthusiasm for the project, everyone involved from editorial to art dived in to make it a perfect lampoon.

Events turned sour when Jeremy Spencer handed *Sinclair User*'s editor an advance copy of the issue. Within hours, *Sinclair User*'s publishing company, East Midland Allied Press, sought an injunction to prevent the issue being distributed. As many of the events which took place thereafter are still *sub judice* (going through the legal process), it is not possible to mention them here.

EMAP won its injunction and the issue had to be recalled, the four offending pages trimmed and a sticker placed on the cover stating briefly why they were missing before the magazines could be redistributed.

To avoid the possibility of a libel suit being filed against Graeme Kidd and Newsfield, the matter was settled out of court, and in the Christmas Special we printed an official apology.

Ironically, public feeling about all these goings-on appeared to run in CRASH's favour – and whether or not it had any bearing on the matter, from that moment on the magazine's circulation spiralled rapidly upwards, from around 50,000 copies a month to over 100,000.

But before all this took place, while the edition was being prepared, the CRASH team treated themselves to some more innocent fun. Part Five of the Sinclair Story which we had been running dealt with Sinclair's battery car, the C5. Seen as risible in many quarters, the C5 found an unlikely home in Ludlow when a local car-hire firm purchased several to act as sight-seeing buggies for the tourists who flock to the town every summer – strange when you consider how hilly Ludlow is, and therefore how much pedalling the tourists had to do to help the motor cope with the strain!

For the article several CRASH reviewers went down to the car-hire firm and took the C5s out for a reviewing trip. The resultant buggy wars on the market carpark did a lot for the C5's reputation among CRASH staff, but sadly failed to save it from its ultimate fate of obscurity.

More germane to the magazine, though, Ocean gave us the Spectrum version of *Frankie Goes To Hollywood*, all icons, windowing, spoof games, puzzles and highly creditable graphics; what with this and Beyond's *Spy Vs Spy* with its simultaneous split-screen presentation, it looked like hit games from now on were going to have to be complex and sophisticated to succeed – though of the two other Smashes, Imagine's *Hypersports* was really more of the same only better done, and *Nodes Of Yesod* was more of a different same only done superlatively by Odin.

A newcomer's advert is likely to arouse curiosity and Odin's was very classy. It ran for two months before the game's release, but Odin wasn't really as virgin as everyone thought, it was just another name for Thor, whose high-tech Liverpool offices were situated immediately opposite the sad-looking, derelict windows of Bug-Byte – in the midst of death, there's life . . .




A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.20 SEPTEMBER 1985
95p
CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM
RED MOON
Another Smash from Level 9
MONTY ON THE RUN
Gremlin
POPEYE
Dk Tronics
THE ELECTRIC PENCIL COMPANY
From Fourth Protocol to Zoids
SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
DUN DARACH
ALIEN 8
The Maps

September 1985
Issue No. 20

Released on
August 29th

It was time for another grotesque cover after three relatively calm ones, and with fangs and venomous saliva foremost in his mind Oliver sought a suitable subject. He found it in Level 9's Red Moon *adventure, which featured mythical beasts. It's interesting to compare Oliver's painting with that of the game's packaging: Level 9 provided a sinuously elegant snake-dragon, vibrantly attractive and decorative, CRASH had this stark, violent monster, virtually bursting off the cover with its sheer ferocity. The startling impact is quite otherworldly and satisfyingly terrifying.*

After a terse apology for the delay in putting Issue 19 on sale, the editorial speculated on Sinclair's rumoured launch of a 128K Spectrum. Commodore had released a 128K machine, Amstrad was about to show its CPC 6128, it certainly seemed time that the Spectrum should be upgraded. Sources suggested Sinclair's new computer was code-named The Derby, and speculated that it might appear at The *PCW* Show in September, only a month away. Prediction can be a dodgy game, and as we now know the wait would be far longer.

CRASH Software Editor Jeremy Spencer was part of the local landed gentry (so he claimed!), and on his several acres raised sheep who thought they were dogs, dogs who thought they were writers (a picture of one appeared at an Apricot keyboard) and horses who thought they were artists – well, one foal was named Oli. Oli became something of a mascot, with regular update pictures appearing as he grew up. This rural aspect of what was otherwise a technological entertainment magazine puzzled many of our rivals, and possibly some readers too, but it was all part of CRASH's idiosyncratic style.

Visitors to the Ludlow offices could have been forgiven for thinking that eccentricity and not idiosyncrasy was the hallmark of CRASH staff, for the place was littered with flashing, whirring dinosaur monsters – Zoids. They were there because Martech had the licence to produce a Zoids game, there for reference because Martech wanted Oliver to do a cover, and there because Jeremy Spencer couldn't resist them. He interviewed Martech's Zoids development team, Electronic Pencil Company, a job made all the more satisfying since the team had also programmed Jeremy's other favourite game, *The Fourth Protocol*, which Derek had Smashed the month before.

Icons had come a long way since Pete Cooke's first tentative use of them and they were obviously here to stay. In *The Fourth Protocol* icons were more than just a useful device, they were the very essence of the game, helping to generate a nail-biting atmosphere in this unusual adventure. Electronic Pencil Company was, like Denton Designs, another example of the new spirit of professionalism in software writing which was making it easier for software houses to concentrate on sourcing ideas and marketing them.

This more forward-thinking approach, however, placed extra pressures on Roger Kean as the publisher of CRASH. Software houses had caught on to the power of having their game featured on a cover. At this stage Martech wanted a Zoids cover soon, Domark wanted one for its *Friday The 13th* licence, and Beyond wanted one for the much-hyped forthcoming Superman game. Of course, all these would appear at the same time, he was assured, so they all wanted their covers the same month! In the event, both Martech and Domark were satisfied and Superman turned into a debacle.

After a couple of disappointing Monty games, Gremlin Graphics put Monty's creator, Peter Harrap, back into the hot seat and he turned up with the Smashed *Monty On The Run*. His original was barely revamped but the sequel was more difficult and had the novelty of a somersaulting mole, a device used many times since. Others were sprinting as well, for Design Design released *On The Run*, an elegant maze game with large graphics by Stuart Ruecroft, who had earlier been employed by Fantasy. Also among the month's hits were Costa Panayi's isometric *Highway Encounter*, *Red Moon* and the welcome return of veteran Spectrum programmer Don Priestly with *Popeye*, using the huge, animated characters that have since become his trademark.




CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM
A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 21 OCTOBER 198
95p
PREVIEW
Return of the Seiddab
ASTRO CLONE
HEWSON CONSULTANTS
SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
BRILL PULL-OUT CENTREFOLD
PLUS
REVIEWS
TECH-NICHE
ROBIN CANDY
PLAYING TIPS
LLOYD MANGRAM
CRASH COURSE
DEREK BREWSTER
COMPETITIONS
PROFILES

October 1985
Issue No. 21

Released on
September 26th

We hadn't had a space shoot-'em-up picture on the cover of CRASH all year, and only the footballer from Issue 16 had managed to get above the stratosphere. Oliver looked around for a possible subject for this issue, settling on a game previewed in it: Hewson's Astro Clone. *In truth the cover could be referring to any number of games, or no game at all, but it's a fascinating insight into an illustrator's mind, showing that without some subject to hang the design on in the first place it's hard to get going at all. The ends need a means to justify them.*

The eighth *PCW* Show was over, giving an excuse to print lots of those pictures you cringe at years later – and people wonder why I hate being photographed! Oddly, the usual flurry of hasty releases just in time for the show failed to materialise, leaving the hordes milling around watching demos.

CRASH had little better to offer, for the real action took place in the featured previews, which gave the ever-space-grabbing Robin Candy a fine time: three previews only he could handle (according to him). A Gargoyle Games fan since *Tir Na Nòg*, he pestered Greg Follis daily till an early version of the next game was viewable at the company's Dudley offices. *Marsport* followed in the footsteps of *Dun Darach*, but with a new hero and a different style of control from the familiar presentation.

A Steve Turner fan since *Avalon*, Robin was able to gurgle happily about Hewson's *Astro Clone*, which weirdly enough resembled *Marsport* in some screens. And a dangerous *Elite* fan since Firebird released the Commodore version, he could finally get to grips with an early copy for the Spectrum.

Another preview – and it turned out to be far too early – was of Elite's cartoon licence *Scooby Doo*. As outlined in this issue, the game sounded and looked marvellous, but alas it was not to be. Elite ran into programming problems which it couldn't resolve, and dropped the game. Later it would be contracted out to Gargoyle Games to redesign and would appear in time for the next year's *PCW* Show.

Actually in review, the Smashes included *Nightshade* from Ashby-based Ultimate with the confusing programming credit of Rare Ltd. Despite its high rating, there was a hint of disapproval in the critical comments, a note that no progress had been made since *Alien 8*. Speculation ran rife that perhaps the most successful software house ever had begun to lose its touch, not helped by further rumours that British Telecom, which was releasing converted Ultimate games on the 64 through Firebird, was in the market to buy the Leicestershire company.

Derek Brewster picked on an adventure with the Wild West-like title of *The Touchstones Of Rhiannon* to Smash – actually it was about Robin Of Sherwood – but down in arcade alley the joystick-wielders were struggling over the complex karate movements in Melbourne House's genre-founding *The Way Of The Exploding Fist*. There was some disagreement over its playability, but its evident qualities made it a Smash.

The results of the 1985 CRASHtionnaire were published, revealing that at 17.2 years the average reader's age was far higher than anyone had anticipated, and that Playing Tips was a clear winner as a section. Another result was a demand for a pay increase from Robin (it went to arbitration, but I can't remember the outcome).

Three fresh names appeared: Simon N Goodwin's Tech Tipster contributions started, answering those little problems that affect the technically-minded, and Ian Craig featured as On The Cover artist. Ian would later join Newsfield as an illustrator. The third was a new staff member, Sean Masterson, who took over Frontline after a two-month gap left by Angus Ryall's departure from computer gaming.

This month saw the start of Newsfield's Amstrad magazine AMTIX! in direct competition with *Amstrad Action*, which was launched at the same time. Jeremy Spencer became AMTIX! coeditor with Roger Kean, each of them doubling their existing roles. And Newsfield had spawned its first spin-off, for *Amstrad Action*'s publisher was Chris Anderson, ex-editor of ZZAP!.




A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 22 NOVEMBER 1985
95p
CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM
THE ZOIDS ARE COMING!
Will they take the planet by force? We look at MARTECH's exciting new project for Christmas
SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
COMPETITIONS GALORE
WIN! WIN!

November 1985
Issue No. 22

Released on October 24th

The Zoids cover almost failed to materialise. Martech suffered delays in development of the program, and would have preferred to put it off for a month. But the December cover was already promised to another. After much hesitation it was decided to go with the Zoids game preview at the very last moment; so here is another painting executed by Oliver with only a couple of hours to spare. As large figures on a monstrous scale, explosions and blasting beams of light have always been among of his specialities, it was not a serious problem to produce something excellent in a short time.

Excitement! Sinclair had produced a 128K Spectrum! Well, not quite. He'd signed a deal with Investronica of Spain and the Spanish had a 128K machine. It was something of an insult, but to be fair, as the editorial stated, the City had given Sir Clive a hard time, no wonder he turned abroad for comfort. Would the new machine be made available in Britain? Not likely, not with the financial position of Sinclair, sitting on stocks of abortive QLs and yet-to-be-sold Spectrum + machines in the high streets. CRASH did eventually get its hands on a Spanish 128 and discovered that it would have been of little relevance to the British market. We were still left waiting.

CRASH's editorial masthead had expanded yet again, to credit Gary Penn, Julian Rignall and Gary Liddon as contributing writers. This was at a time when there was an all-hands-to-the-deck feeling about the small staff putting together three magazines. Penn and Rignall, however, only contributed a little to CRASH reviews, working mostly on ZZAP!.

Gary Liddon had originally applied in the previous year. He wasn't taken on then, but had gone on to do reviews for *Big K*, and when that magazine closed he went to work for Domark. It was there that Jeremy Spencer met him during a preview for *A View To A Kill* and was impressed enough to suggest Newsfield hire him as a Staff Writer. At first Gary's function was to rove between all three magazines, but eventually he settled down as a ZZAP! writer, remaining with the magazine till Newsfield appointed him to Thalamus, its software house.

Astro Clone and *Marsport* were two of the Smashes for the issue, hardly surprises. Neither was *Elite* a surprise. The Spectrum version lacked some of the Commodore's qualities, but made up for them that in speed; it was undoubtedly a Smash. The Edge also earned its spurs with Bo Jangeborg's *Fairlight*. It was superficially like recent Ultimate 3-D games, but CRASH reviewers saw it as knocking 'Filmation' into a cocked hat *and* providing a depth of game to go with the graphics. Bubble Bus scored again with Steve Crow and *Starquake*, a beautifully-designed game which led one reviewer to comment that it was the route Ultimate should have taken.

Melbourne House's follow-up to *The Way Of the Exploding Fist*, another joystick–manipulating fight game called *Fighting Warrior*, struck a chord of discontent. It just didn't work well enough. But Sean Masterson found himself satisfied interviewing a programmer working for CRL on a game called *Tau Ceti*. The programmer in question was Pete Cooke, veteran of Richard Shepherd adventure days (*Urban Upstart* for instance) and responsible for CRL's modest *Juggernaut*. Sean was impressed by Pete's good taste in science-fiction novels, but there seemed no doubt that *Tau Ceti* would be a success for CRL, a long-lived software house in search of a hit game.

After some 20 months of single-handedly photographing all game screens for the magazines, David Western got some help in the form of a young local photographer called Cameron Pound. It was to be some months before Cameron ceased to be a trainee and got his name on the masthead, but today Cameron and his assistant Michael Parkinson take and process hundreds of colour and monochrome pictures every month.

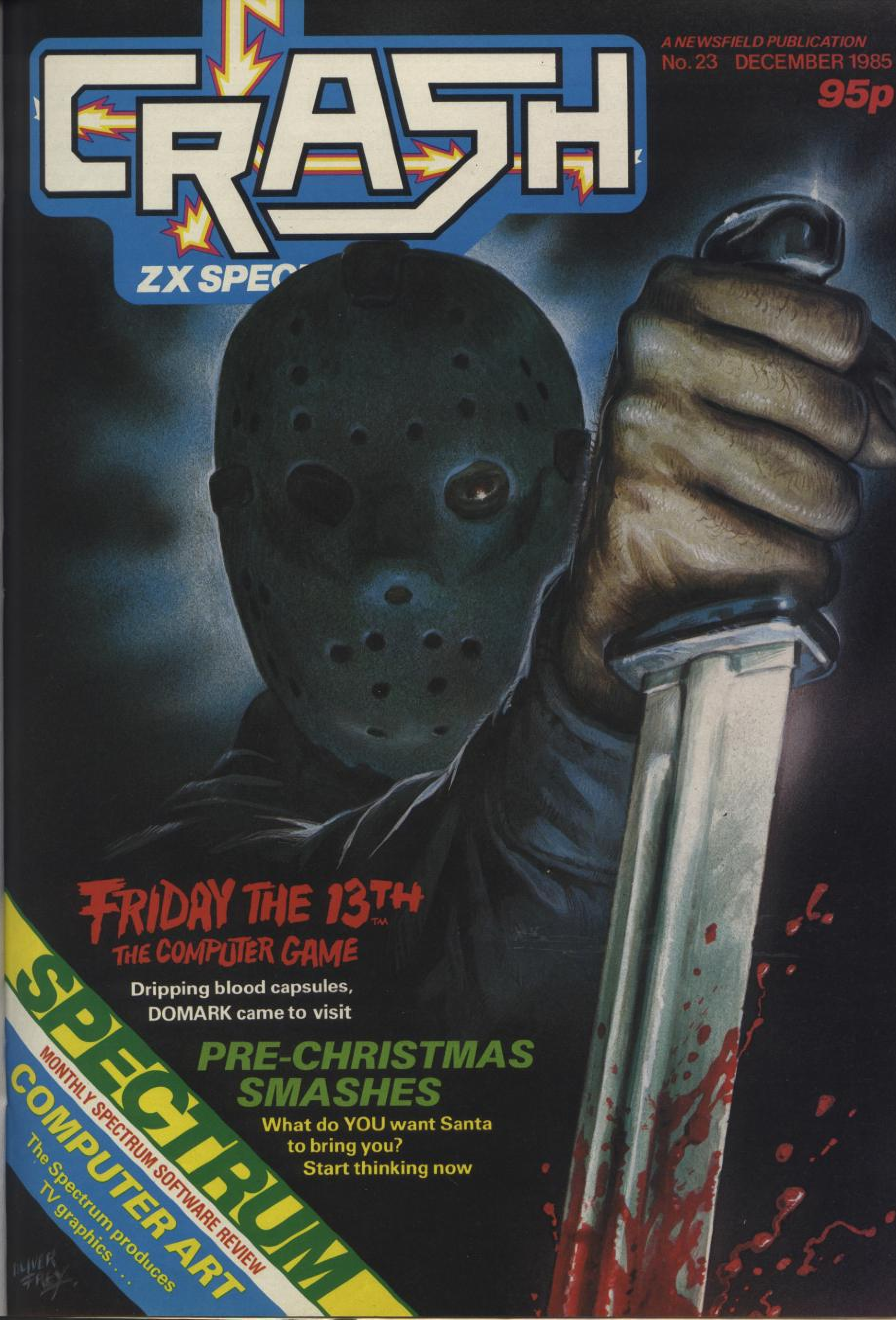
As we went to press, deals were being finalised for December's cover for Domark. The idea seemed sound enough, but in several ways it was to be a severe problem . . .



CRASH

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No. 23 DECEMBER 1985
95p

ZX SPEC



FRIDAY THE 13TH™
THE COMPUTER GAME

Dripping blood capsules, DOMARK came to visit

PRE-CHRISTMAS SMASHES

What do YOU want Santa to bring you? Start thinking now

SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

COMPUTER ART
The Spectrum produces TV graphics. . . .

December 1985
Issue No. 23

Released on November 21st

As this is a personal view, I'll be honest and say that though this isn't the worst CRASH cover it's certainly Oliver's poorest. There's no doubting the visual impact created by the hand seen in close-up, bearing its blood-drenched dagger, but there's also little doubt that this was a subject in which Oliver had little interest – or rather, he felt less out of sorts with the subject than with the way the Editor wanted it portrayed. To fans of the gore-a-minute film series, there was no need for a cover line to say 'Jason's back' in Friday The 13th.

Some readers, newsagents and several readers' parents were appalled by the cover, and extended their opprobrium to the *Friday The 13th* preview which showed Domark's Mark Strachan and Dominic Wheatley posed in a particularly gruesome and bloody manner. One parent, so upset by what she saw, sent the whole caboodle to the Press Council. Nothing came of it, but clearly the affair was an unhappy one. I defended the cover in the Forum, but it was seen as unfortunate in the sense that the preview was a thin editorial excuse for forcing the cover idea on Oliver – especially thin when you consider that the game itself would not be reviewed till June 1986 and then would only receive 32%!

Roger Kean had expressed doubts about the subject, feeling that it would be better to do a humorous picture, more in the cartoon style of *Mad*, but he was away from Ludlow when the final decision was taken and the cover painted.

Two other previews struck a somewhat happier note. Robin Candy had been aware for some time that Gargoyle Games had in mind a 'fun package' for Christmas, so he was pleased that they revealed the new comic hero, Sweevo, to him first. The other game previewed had been gestating far longer, for over 18 months in fact. It was PSS's *Swords And Sorcery*, programmed by Mike Simpson, who also devised the MIDAS adventure-writing system which *Swords And Sorcery* used. MIDAS was vaunted as a revolutionary piece of adventure/role-playing game graphics and control software from which would spring many games in the same vein as *Swords And Sorcery*. However, to date not much has been made of it.

An unusual event occurred: Mosaic's *The Secret Diary Of Adrian Mole* was reviewed twice, once in the ordinary game reviews, where it got 86%, and again in Derek's Adventure Trail, where he gave it a Smash. That was no bad thing for the reader – but a damned nuisance for the index and historical database!

There were seven Smashes in all, reflecting the closeness of Christmas boom time. With only a few games to its credit – but very polished ones – Microsphere reprised *Skool Daze* with the improved *Back To Skool*. Melbourne House scored two with its *Marble Madness*-like *Gyroscope*, and the spoof adventure of foreign seaside silliness, *Terrormolinos*. Durell gave us *Critical Mass*, a game I never liked much, and the flight-simulation freaks at Digital Integration slammed in with *Tomahawk* – that military helicopter that positively reeks of danger.

The last Smash was for a new software house, Electric Dreams. Launched at The *PCW* Show, Rod Cousens's Electric Dreams was an offshoot of Activision. Its first released game was *I, Of The Mask*, an elegantly contrived 3-D 'tunnel' experience by Sandy White, whose previous games were the revolutionary *Ant Attack* and its sequel *Zombie Zombie*.

Swallowing up existing software houses was by now an established practice, but creating offshoot labels like Electric Dreams was fairly new. It smacked of corporation tactics and echoed the music industry with its giant parent recording companies and their numerous labels each specialising in a different musical style. Ocean had done much the same with Imagine when it bought the title from the Receiver. To start with, Imagine specialised in sports games, but with its Konami licences Imagine's game portfolio broadened out. No-one was quite clear what Electric Dreams would do that was different from Activision, but everyone agreed it would be interesting to wait and see.





A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
No.24 1985/1986
£1.95
CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM
Christmas Special
SPACE INVADERS
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Win Books, Diaries, Modems, Games, Colour Telly, Microdrives, a Weekend Away, T-Shirts etc . . .
LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOK BACK
POKES EXTRAVAGANZA!
Rob Candy goes bananas
GARGOYLE GAMES
We talk to the men behind the heroes.
HEWSON'S SPHINX
An astonishing new game revealed!
SPECTRUM
MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW
GIANT POSTER
8 exciting pages big, printed both sides!
Plus pull out calendar with surprises!

Christmas 1985
Issue No. 24

Released on
December 12th

Christmas comes but once a year . . . and so do friendly aliens, this time not bearing gifts but taking them back to a planet underprivileged enough not have Spectrums, joysticks and Cub monitors. Perhaps that spacecraft glowing ET-like in the background is more used to descending aggressively in the face of fearsome Earth defence fire. This picture could easily have been mawkish if it weren't for Oliver's knack of adding the uneasy element; the visual gag is the Space Invaders *cassette, but it is the alien's dubious expression that makes in tautly funny.*

Once again it was a giant special edition, and brought with it the now-familiar problems of a drastically shortened schedule because the issue would be on sale earlier in the month than usual. And the pressure wasn't helped by the flurry of late-for-Christmas games to review.

Seven Smashes was a fair crop. Odin's *Robin Of The Wood* with presentation reminiscent of *Sabre Wulf* scored because of the character interaction. Mastertronic's sequel to *Finders Keepers*, *Spellbound*, found favour, as did the finished version of Durell's *Saboteur*, which hadn't looked quite as promising when seen at The *PCW* Show.

A new name, Insight, hit the mark with a shoot-'em-up called *Vectron*, whose ultrafast 3-D graphics impressed everyone. Derek pronounced *Swords And Sorcery* to be a Smash, justifying the 18 months that had gone into it. And Elite received two Smashes, one for an unusually playable platform game, *Roller Coaster*, and the other for the long-awaited Capcom *Commando* conversion.

Commando, already released on the 64, had been disappointing, but its Spectrum counterpart was much better. In reverse, however, System 3's *International Karate*, a big 64 hit, missed the mark on the Spectrum and only got 68%.

In the year since the last Christmas Special, Newsfield's offices in King Street had altered dramatically. What a year earlier had been spacious and underoccupied was now cramped – a situation that was to get worse still, and one we've had to live with since. The editorial floor, which had been home to Roger Kean, Matthew Uffindell, myself on a few days and two part-timers after school hours, now had to support eight full-time staff, five part-timers and the increasingly complex photographic setup.

The middle floor was worse still, with nine staff whose tasks included mail order, subscriptions, advertisement administration, reception, accounts and mail order/subscription storage and packing.

With subscriptions running at several thousand per magazine, it was becoming obvious that King Street could no longer hold all the subscription copies, even for the few days it took to send them out. A solution would not be found till 1986, but in the meantime the entire company, including the five art-department staff, formed chain gangs once a week to transport magazine bundles from the street up the stairs to a room on the middle floor. The lorries delivering our subscription copies were frequently the juggernauts Pete Cooke had so vividly described in his CRL game, definitely not suited to Ludlow's quaintly narrow streets. Newsfield unloading sessions became a fraught business, a battle against time and the inevitable intervention of the traffic warden.

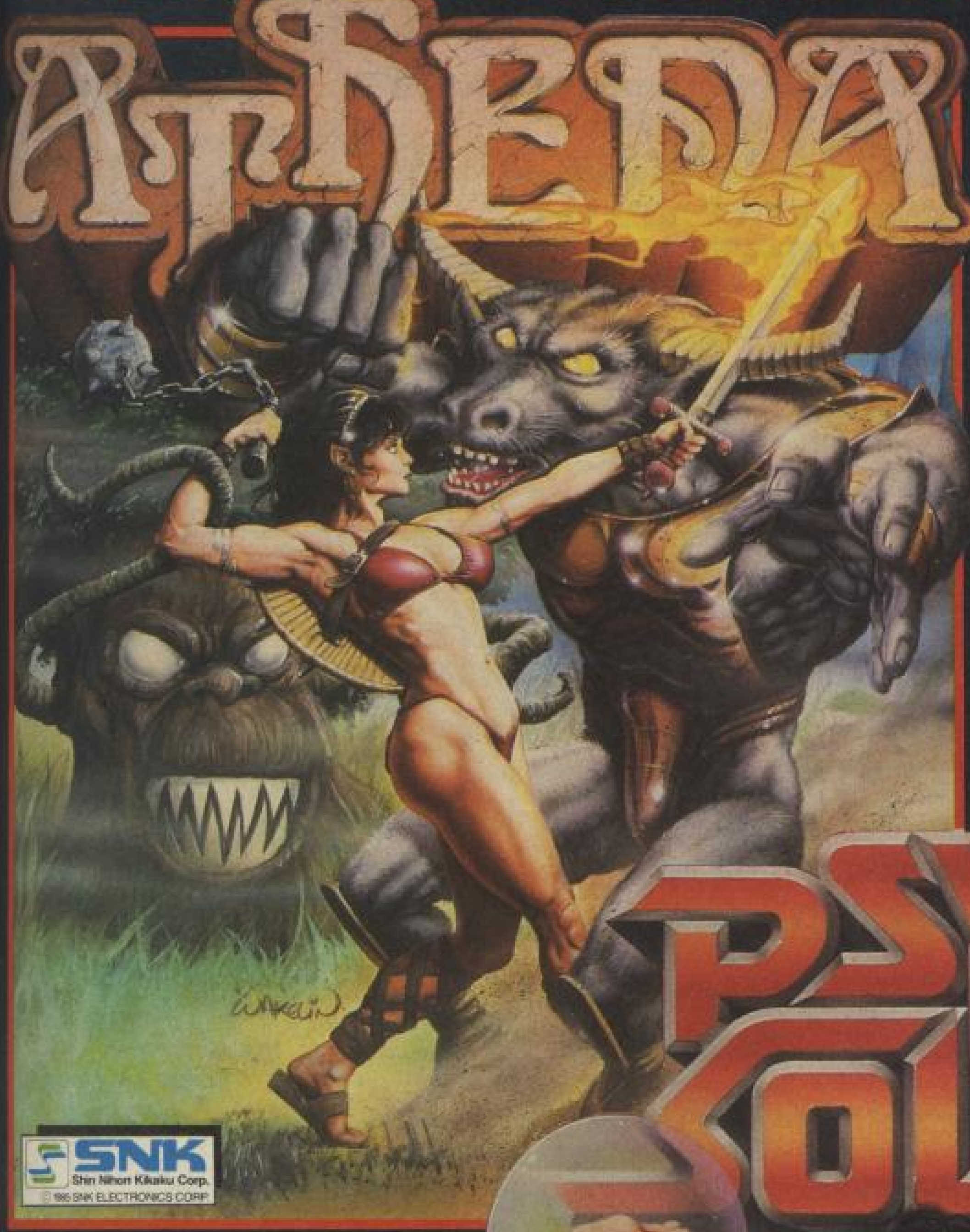
Eventually a real fight did ensue with Ludlow's solitary traffic warden, a moment of sublime looniness when the large ex-policeman warden, driven mad by our constant blockages, pinned Oliver Frey to Victoria Wine's wall and threatened assault before several bemused Newsfield witnesses. Ludlow now has two traffic wardens – is this progress or retaliation?

As soon as the Christmas issues had gone to press, February's had to be considered, for ZZAP! at least had to be at the printer before the Christmas break. It was a weary team that gathered at the Bull Hotel for the Newsfield Christmas Dinner a few days before the holiday, but no-one could fail to be pleased. CRASH's circulation figures were among the highest ever achieved for a computer title in Britain, ZZAP! was doing splendidly and hopes for AMTIX! were running high. It seemed a good way to go into the New Year.



The CRASH History continues next month with Issues 25 to 36

FROM THE ARCADES–A TIGRESS!

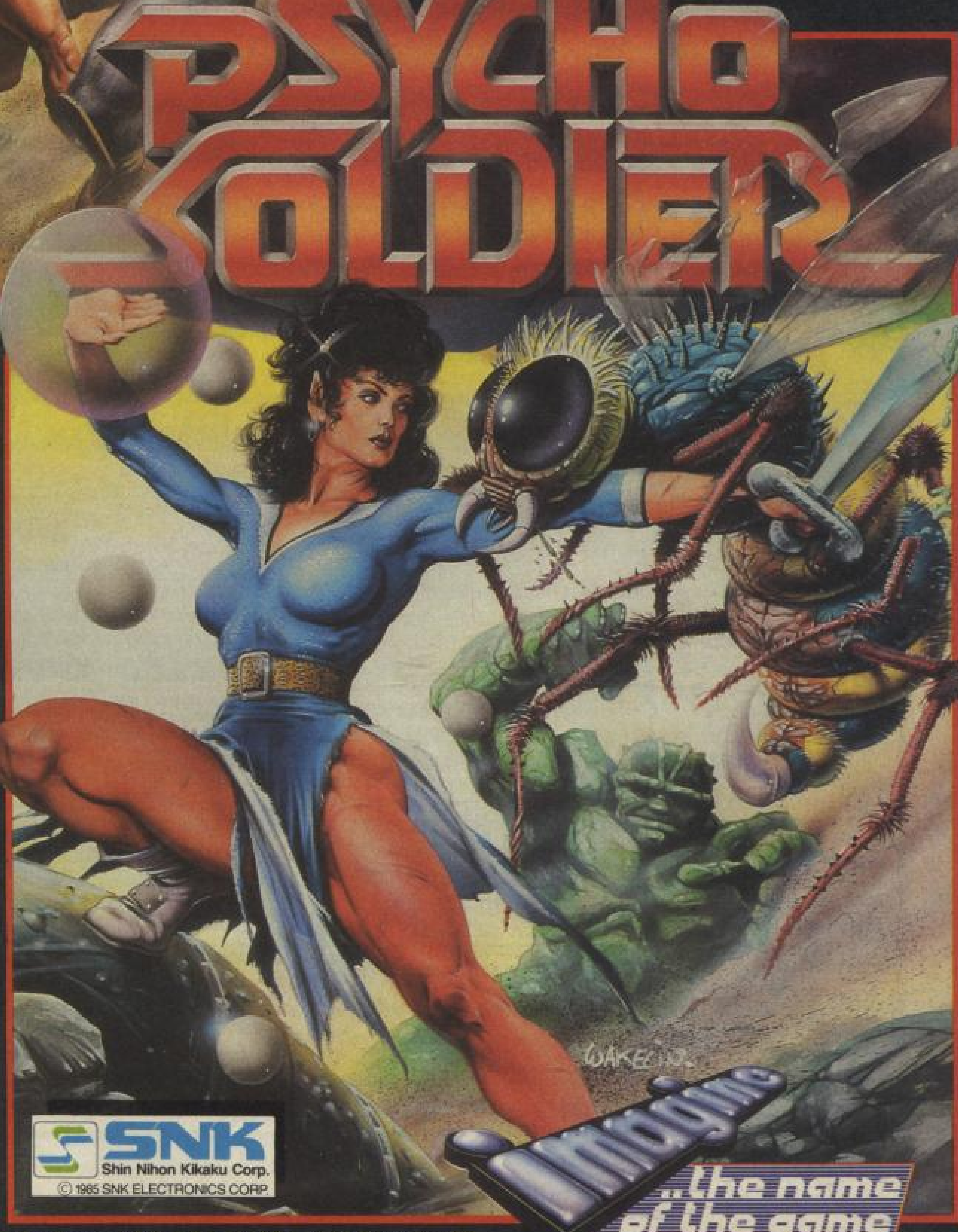


Her mission, to enter the last world and slay its evil guardian, but the last world is seven worlds away on a long and dangerous journey through the worlds of forest, cavern, sky, sea, labyrinth and hell, each having its own formidable guardian which must be overpowered and slain. Collect armour and weapons but beware the energy sapping poison for which only a secret medicine is the cure. Superlative graphics and arcade style action game play add up to a great package for the coin-op kings.

SPECTRUM £7.95 COMMODORE £8.95
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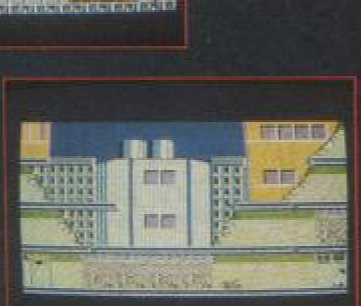




Athena isn't finished yet Physco Soldier, the sequel, is another world. Athena has changed and she has a friend. She is Physco Soldier with a thirst for action and adventure and when her mission is complete you just won't believe the ending – a surprise you can't afford to miss! A great game, tipped for the top, from the SNK arcade label.

SPECTRUM £7.95
COMMODORE £8.95
AMSTRAD £8.95





Imagine Software Limited, 6 Central Street, Manchester M2 5NS. Tel: 061 834-3939. Telex: 669977.

TECH NICHE

RAM PAGE



JON BATES on insufferable noise, matricide and two Ram Music Machine utilities

WELCOME to the zoo. Things have been fairly hectic here at the Bates Motel and what with letters to answer and programs to review, I've really been pushed to find time to stab people in showers and push cars into swamps and as to buying all those old ladies clothes . . . there simply aren't enough jumble sales to go round.

But seriously . . .

As promised last month, here are two overviews of programs designed to run on the Ram/Flare Music Machine and brought to my attention by RAMM!, the users' club. Both concentrate on developing utilities that form part of the original package and they're both really useful additions to the original.

First on the stocks is the *Sample Editor* from Quasar Software. It comes in two configurations on the same tape, for the 48 and the + Spectrums, and the basic idea is that it can look at samples you've made using the Music Machine in greater detail and do a lot more to them than the Ram product alone can.

When you've put samples through the treatment they can be reloaded back into your sample files for instant use – well, nearly. The honest introduction to the manual does tell you the shortcomings of sampling on the Spectrum and acknowledges that by necessity any sampling on it is a sort of compromise.

On loading up there are no voices present, so this means digging out your sampler files. It would have been nicer and more immediate for the first-time user to have some samples to play with, but never mind.

Once a sample is loaded, several options give you access to peripherals of the sample. Any alterations at any stage can either be displayed as a waveform or played from a screen keyboard display. 'Equalize' has a representation of a graphic equalizer and you can emphasise or de-emphasise particular harmonics over a very wide selection of 28 narrow harmonic bands, thus pruning odd harmonies and inharmonic frequencies.

Overall volume and pitch can be altered; changing the latter is important if you've sampled at a weird pitch which renders that sample useless to anyone but a dab hand at transposing.

But the real smartie part is the waveform display and 'manual alteration' which spreads the sample waveform over several pages. Microscopic sections of the sample can be chopped out, inserted, and the join made smooth by carefully checking the values at the new splice. At each juncture the part or whole of the sample can be played so that you can aurally check your handiwork.

And at any stage in any of *Sample Editor*'s functions you can restore the original sample if you go wrong; whatever you do, you have a backup. *Sample Editor* is well worth the £9.99 that will bring it to you from: Quasar Software, *83 Clerkenwell Road., London EC1* tel (01) 987 3908. They threaten us with more goodies in the near future. (By the way, Quasar lads, my name is NOT Tony.)

MAKING TRACKS

The second program is an eight-track MIDI recorder and player, *Ram Tracks*. This is a comprehensive recorder with all the usual facilities. Recording is done on the selected MIDI channel in either mono or poly mode and in real time. The number of bars to be entered is preset by the user and there is a click metronome that comes either from the headphones or line-out socket.

Each little section recorded forms a pattern which is filed away. It can later be assembled with the other patterns into a song – very much in the manner of the Specdrum. For each pattern the notes are displayed and scrolled graphically and the pitch shown on a screen piano keyboard.

Notes can be edited, removed or entered via the MIDI keyboard in this fashion. A pattern recorded on any channel can be swapped to any other channel and it magically and visually jumps from track to track. Patterns can be copied so that similar patterns can run concurrently.

Ram Tracks will also recognize incoming MIDI channel information and put the notes into the correct channel/track automatically, which is quite useful if you're recording on several separate channels simultaneously.

At this point I have to confess that either my version of the program or my Music Machine went a bit bananas and started putting out a one-volt metronome pulse into the MIDI Out cable. The result of this was that my new superwhizzo multikeyboard went into immediate hibernation and remained comatose till the voltage was removed from its port. Investigation of the program was rather abruptly curtailed. (I seem to remember that Mr Goodwin did borrow the hardware from me at some point, but I'm sure that's merely coincidental!)

Suffice to say that *Ram Tracks* seems a pretty good utility, and if you have the hardware it'll save you having to purchase another interface and program and spending a lot more cash than you need to. A couple of minus points: it doesn't record note velocity or patch changes, it only works in 48K mode and I've never liked the idea of replay speeds notated in anything other than beats per minute. Why set another standard when there's a universal one already?

A more expensive update of *Ram Tracks* is round the corner, but you could dive in now and send £14.99 to J.B. Computing, *Box Bush Farm, Summer Lane, West Wick, Weston-super-Mare, Avon BS24 7TF.*

▶ *Ram Tracks* **from J.B. Computing records Machine music for MIDI use**



CORRECTIONS – TECTRICS *COMPUCHORD*

Last month's CRASH misspelt the names of Tectrics and its chord computer program *Compuchord* (those spellings are correct), and also made an error in Tectrics's postcode. The company's address is *17 Whittington Road, Tilgate, Crawley, West Sussex RH10 5AN.*

Tectrics has asked us to point out that at the moment *Compuchord* is only available as a keyboard tutor with sound, and the upgrade with guitar-chord display and MIDI compatibility via any interface will not be out till after Christmas.

TECH TIPS



SIMON N GOODWIN nips round the back of his 128K Spectrums for a voyage into the unknown socket – and discovers further faces of Romantic Robot's Multiface 3

ANY PORT IN A SOCKET

THERE'S a spare interface socket fitted to every 128K Spectrum, as readers keep reminding me. Tech Tips in CRASH Issue 41 explained that Sinclair is very secretive about the keypad socket labelled 'AUX' on the new +3, but since then I've had some success in finding out about this interface and controlling it from 128 BASIC. This is the story so far . . .

When the 128 first appeared – in Spain at the end of 1985 – a small box, rather like a calculator with no display, was connected to the keypad socket by a curly lead. The box worked as a numeric pad and provided extra functions in the BASIC editor. You can get the same effects with combinations of keys on the main keyboard, as noted in Issue 33 Tech Tips.

The 128 arrived in Britain in February 1986, but the keypad apparently didn't come with it; all the keypads I've seen have been labelled in Spanish. That leaves most 128-users with a spare telephone socket at the edge of their machine and no information on how to use it.

There are a few hints in the back of the +3 manual, which says 'the AUX socket supports two input lines and two output lines, connected to the AY-3-8912. Using software control loops the I/O lines could be driven as a second RS-232 port. Alternatively, they could be used to drive a robot or some external device.'

This sounded interesting, albeit easier said than done, so I plugged a six-way telephone plug into the long-suffering 128 that I share with fellow Techie Jon Bates and tried a few experiments.

KEY NOTES

The AY-3-8912 is the 128's sound chip. I explained its inner workings in Issue 32 Tech Tips but didn't say much about the 8-bit port built in. The four most significant bits of this port (values 16, 32, 64 and 128) are used for input, and the other four for output; two of each are allocated to the keypad and two of each to the RS-232/MIDI socket.

Reading from left to right as you look into the keypad socket, with the notch on the left, the first connection carries a +12-volt supply. The next is connected to input bit 5. Then come output bit 1, input bit 4 and output bit 0. The last connection is a signal earth (0 volts).

These signals are adequate for most serial interfaces but not enough to connect a joystick, which needs five inputs. The Sinclair keypad contained electrickery to distinguish 15 different keys, but it couldn't tell you if more than one key was pressed.

You must switch the port between input and output as required, by changing the value of bit 6 in register 7. The lower six bits are used to control the sound channels. It's best to set them to 1 unless you want unplanned beeps and fizzes to accompany your experiments. The top bit, bit 7, is only used by the chip's big brother, the AY-3-8910, which sports two 8-bit ports rather than one.

You use OUT 65533 to select a particular register (storage cell) in the sound chip. After that you can read and write that register's value with IN 49149 and OUT 49149.

Use OUT 65533,7 to select register 7 in the sound chip, and OUT 49149,127 to set up the port for output. In theory OUT 49149,63 should allow input from the port, but I have not yet got this to work.

In any case, extra outputs are more useful than inputs on the Amstrad versions of the 128, because they already have ten switch inputs – the joystick sockets, which you can read with IN 61438 and IN 63486.



► Behind the scenes: X marks the secret socket on the back of all 128K Spectrums

DATA OUTPUT

Once you've set up the port you can output data through the keypad socket by writing to register 14. Don't take much current from the socket, or short out the signals. It's OK to connect a light-emitting diode, with a 2.2K resistor to limit the current, but you shouldn't try to run a bulb or an electric motor directly from these outputs.

OUT 65533,14 followed by OUT 49149,2 sends the voltage on the third pin of the keypad socket diving from +12 volts to -11. OUT 49152,0 switches the signal back to +12 volts till you set bit 1 again.

The other output pin, the second from last, can be set to a negative voltage by writing an odd number to register 14. It's only useful for short pulses because the system keeps resetting it to +12 volts.

I hope this information helps some of you put the keypad socket to use – and I'd be interested to hear from anyone who finds out more.

MUSIC MECHANIC

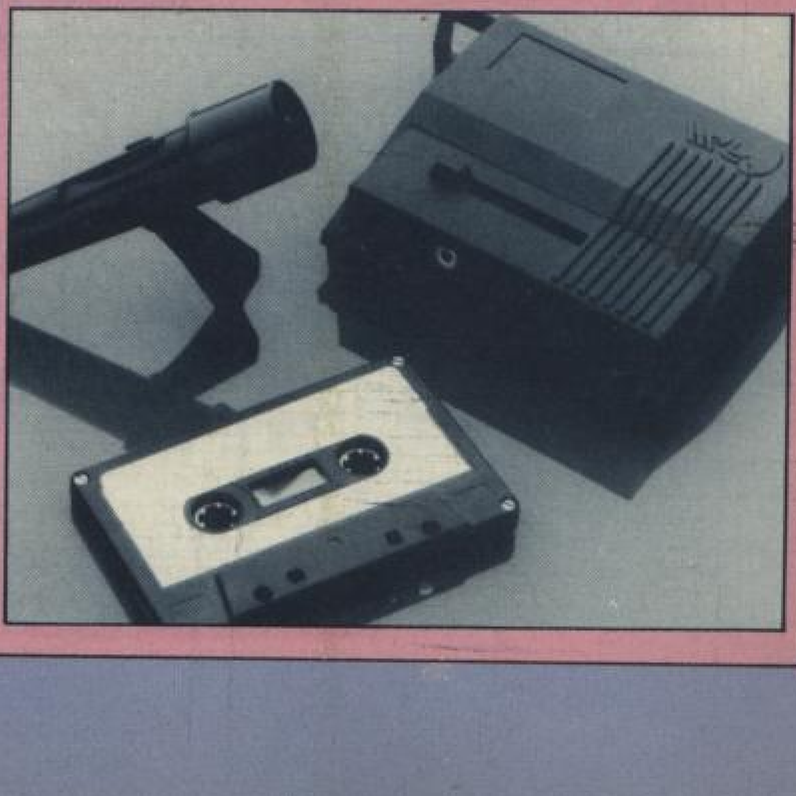
AL STRAKER of RAMM!, the club for users of the Ram Music Machine, has revealed a couple of POKEs that convert sample files saved by the machine into standard CODE format so you can load them into ZX BASIC for analysis and alteration. (Music Machine files normally use file-type 4, which is not compatible with BASIC LOAD and SAVE commands.)

Leave the Music Machine program by entering 'I' from the main menu, and type POKE 39352,3 to make the software use file-type 3 for samples. Type RAND USR 27000 to restart the program. Now sample files can be read into ZX BASIC with LOAD "" CODE. (The format of sample files was explained in Issue 42 Tech Tips.)

POKE 39888,3 lets the Music Machine load CODE files. You can POKE 39888 back to 4 temporarily when you want to load files generated by the original version of the program.

Al Straker has previously contributed advice about mains interference and other Music Machine POKEs, so it's high time he won our Tipster prize. £30 worth of software will be yours, Al, as soon as you let CRASH Mail Order know what you want.

► The Ram Music Machine: now you can analyse files in BASIC



MULTIFACETS

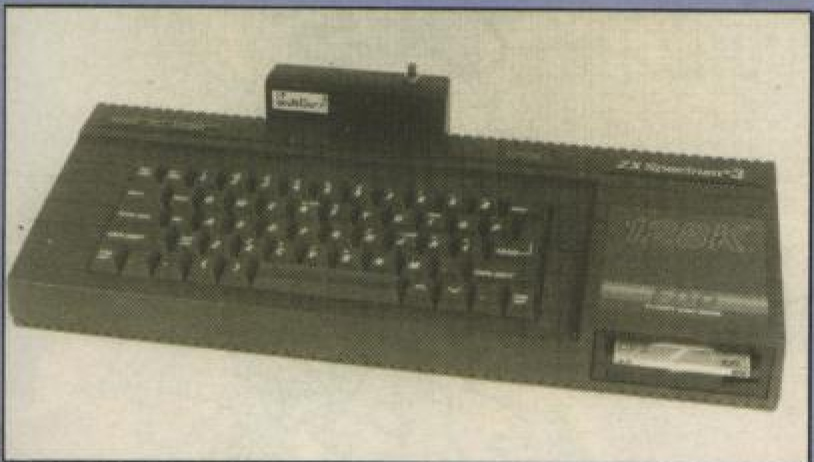
THE PROTOTYPE version of Romantic Robot's Multiface 3 had no through port for other peripherals. This was particularly annoying because, unlike earlier Multifaces, it lacked a Kempston joystick port. Most new programs work with the peculiar ports on the Amstrad Spectrums, and you can plug a normal joystick into them via an adapter, but many old titles only work with the Kempston standard.

This problem has been cured, at a price – the Multiface 3 is now available in two versions. The standard model costs £44.95. If you want to plug other peripherals in the back you'll have to pay an extra fiver for a through port.

The Multiface 3 lets you use the +3 disk drive from 48K BASIC, which is not otherwise possible. You must select this BASIC with the SPECTRUM command from 128 BASIC, rather than using the 48K BASIC option on the main menu, which sets a lock that prevents access to the disk ROM.

The Multiface screen-printout routines are the same as the Multiprint large and shaded COPY formats, which I reviewed in the August CRASH. They use the machine's built-in Centronics port.

The compressed file format is usually an advantage, because it makes loading faster and saves disk space. However, it can be a snag if you want to modify or disassemble a program file. With this in mind, the Multiface 3 lets you switch off the compression and save files as exact copies of the contents of memory.



▶ **A pawn in the pirate war: Romantic Robot's Multiface 3 offers cassette-to-disk transfer, but it could be thwarted by +3 programs**

TRICKS AND TRAPS

Romantic Robot produced the Multiface 3 impressively quickly, and solved some interesting problems en route, but it's unlikely that the Multiface 3 will be the last word in Spectrum cassette-to-disk transfer devices.

Similar gadgets for earlier versions of the Spectrum use an edge-connector signal called ROMCS to turn off the computer's internal ROM and replace it with their own code. In this way they take over the system by redirecting processing to their own code when a button on the gadget is pressed.

But Amstrad has stopped these devices working on the +3 by disconnecting the ROMCS signal!

The Multiface 3 gets around this by using two signals associated with the +3's four ROMs: ROM1-OE and ROM2-OE. This way it can take control of any program intended for earlier Spectrums that runs on the +3. It's important to note that the Multiface 3 *won't* work with a 48K machine and could even *damage* an old computer.

PROBLEMS WITH +3 SOFTWARE?

The Multiface 3 may not work with new programs for the +3. That's because the new Spectrum supports memory configurations intended for the CP/M disk option, and some of these entirely replace the system ROM with RAM, leaving no ROM for the Multiface to disable!

The Multiface normally runs in the 'shadow' of the ROM. If you press the magic button when RAM is in the relevant space, the Multiface 3 waits for the ROM to appear so that it can leap in.

But no Spectrum lets an interface disable RAM . . . so the Multiface will never be able to interrupt games written specifically for the +3 and using the new memory configurations. As far as we're aware nobody has yet released such a program, but no doubt it'll happen soon.

This puts software houses in an interesting position. It means the +3 is the only Spectrum which can run programs that cannot be copied by a magic-button device.

NEW AGE HARDWARE

A Multiface has its antisocial side – it's a powerful tool for a pirate.

Unfortunately, I doubt the +3's unique feature will bring an end to software piracy and a corresponding flood of commercial programs specifically for the +3.

It's possible to make a superMultiface with its own processor, which could take over the system completely whatever the memory arrangement. Such a device would require a lot of new design work, and would be inherently more expensive than the Multiface 3.

And determined hackers, and those who sell products intended specifically for software theft, will probably prefer to learn how to copy protected disks . . .

TAPE TWEAKS

SEVERAL READERS have written in to say that Spectrum +2 loading problems can be cured by adjusting the position of the tape-recorder head. I've dithered awhile about printing this tip, because it's easy to make things worse if you adjust the head carelessly. But I've decided to spill the beans, because it seems a large proportion of the +2 sold recently were not correctly aligned.

The cassette recorder in the +2 is the only mechanical part, and is therefore likely to be the most troublesome. If the head is incorrectly aligned it will tend to misread commercial tapes but the computer will probably still load things *it* saved without trouble – the misalignment cancels out if you load and save with the same machine, though even then there's some loss of quality.

Check the alignment of your cassette unit by playing a well-recorded cassette – a professionally-duplicated music tape, say – through the computer and listening to the sound through the TV. The sound should be bright and clear; there may be a bit of TV noise or interference in the background, but don't worry about that now (I hope to print the cure for that problem next month!)

If the tape sounds very full and bassy it's likely that the head in the recorder needs to be repositioned. Before you do this, check that the tape is correctly positioned in the drive and that the door is properly closed, or you'll have no hope of good results!

There's a small hole in the top of the +2 box, between the cassette door and the control buttons. Press the eject button to open the door, and look into the hole. At the bottom is a screw which sets the angle at which the head passes over the tape. It's when this angle is wrong that the problems start.

Turn the screw clockwise to raise the tape head or anticlockwise to lower it. Don't use a magnetic screwdriver, and if possible use a plastic key rather than a metal screwdriver, as extra metal near the tape head confuses the circuitry. Be careful not to turn the screw far, or it could come undone completely; if one direction doesn't help, or makes things worse, try the other way.

You should find a fairly narrow band where the sound is clear. If you're careful you can use a blob of nail varnish (NOT Superglue!) to hold the screw in place so the alignment won't have to be reset every time you use the machine.

CRASH reader **S G Phelan** sells a kit that includes further instructions on adjusting the +2's tape head, and a knob-and-shaft assembly that fits into the top of the machine, making it easy to adjust the alignment at any time. The kit costs £1.00 from S G Phelan, *47 Dodthorpe O.P.E., Kingston Upon Hull HU6 9HA.*

RODENT CONTROL

PAUL COTTON has written in bemoaning the lack of programs supporting the Kempston mouse system. He wonders if he can extract the mouse-control routines from Softek's *Artist II* and use them in his own programs. He also wants a version of Rainbird's *Art Studio* that works with the Kempston mouse.

I wouldn't recommend extracting the *Artist II* mouse routines, though I'd be interested to hear from anyone who has done it!

The original version of *The Art Studio* only worked with the AMX Mouse, and Kempston sold a special version with its mouse. Together they cost £69.95.

Kempston has now cut the mouse's price to £49.95, and no longer sells the special version of *Art Studio* either with its mouse or separately. However, the *Extended Art Studio* upgrade DOES work with the Kempston mouse, and that's available for £12.00 direct from Rainbird ((01) 240 8838).

When it comes to using the mouse in your own programs, there are two options apart from hacking code out of an existing package. The £9.95 *Kempston Toolkit* includes simple facilities to add support for windows, icons and pointers to existing programs.

The £14.95 *Spectrum Graphics Kit* is more expensive but also more flexible, including an extended BASIC with new mouse commands. Both those programs are published by Kempston Data ((0908) 690018), and come bundled with the new £49.95 mouse package, at no extra charge.

LIVER BOARDS

Everything you wanted to know about improving your VTX but didn't know who to ask – a guide for the man on the 8-bit address bus with PAUL EVANS

IT'S ALL very nice in Ludlow but I'm in the land of docks, two cathedrals and *Bread*. And Liverpool was never famous for weather. As for Halewood (a totally unheard-of village in the 'Pool), it's worse and life is getting right up my nose! Anyway, on with the show – this month I'm looking at how to improve your VTX hardware. Soon you can be laughing at the Beeb owners who supposedly have the best comms software and once laughed at you!

The technical side of the VTX is very simple. (But please note: game freaks who cringe at things like '8-bit address bus' and 'Centronics interfacing leads' should run off screaming for a game of *Exolon* now.) The VTX is just an RS232 interface and a 1200/75 (V23) modem. Easy!

Well.. the RS232 is a very weird version of the actual standard (if there is one!) and as far as I know nobody has managed to connect another modem to it.

The RS232 board has an EPROM fitted which contains the software normally seen on power-up. Basically, this software only has what's needed for logging on. Now a brilliant programmer by the name of David Gorski (aka DeeGee) has turned into a god for Speccy 'netters. He wrote a package which every VTX-owner should have: *VTX Editor*, with features sometimes believed impossible on a Speccy.

COLOUR, GRAPHICS, TELEPHONIST

The most important extra is an ESC key. ESC commands allow the use of colour and graphics when typing, say, a mailbox to someone. It's all done in very neat menus that lead to even more very neat menus which can take you back to some other very neat menu you didn't want to know about. And *VTX Editor* includes valuable timesaving features – for instance, you can save frames to read later if you're panicking about your phone bill.



► **Ripe for redevelopment: a humble VTX awaits software**

If you get LOADS of mailboxes you can answer them by preparing them on *VTX Editor*. (True, this function is available on the VTX's built-in software, but *VTX Editor* is laid out like a proper Prestel screen.) This is known as offline editing and is invaluable to people (like myself) who run sections on Prestel, because the frames can be created and then transmitted at high speed, saving pounds in phone bills on the DUKE Prestel computer.

A new feature for VTXs is available for the first time on *VTX Editor*: access to scrolling boards. Boards running at 1200/75 can be accessed and parity, bits etc can all be set. There's also a facility which scans a frame, takes any mailbox numbers off the screen and stores them on microdrive. You can then set up a mailbox and send it to all the numbers stored automatically. It's known as a junkmailer. Up to 26 frames can be stored in memory and saved to tape or microdrive.

Printer options are available, and programmer Gorski doesn't mind anyone customizing the software for their interface. In fact, the instructions tell you how to alter the software to hold your passwords for automatic sending and phone-number lists!

Other programmers have produced upgrades which enable you to automatically receive MBXs and disable the SYMBOL SHIFT key so SYMBOL SHIFT B produces *.

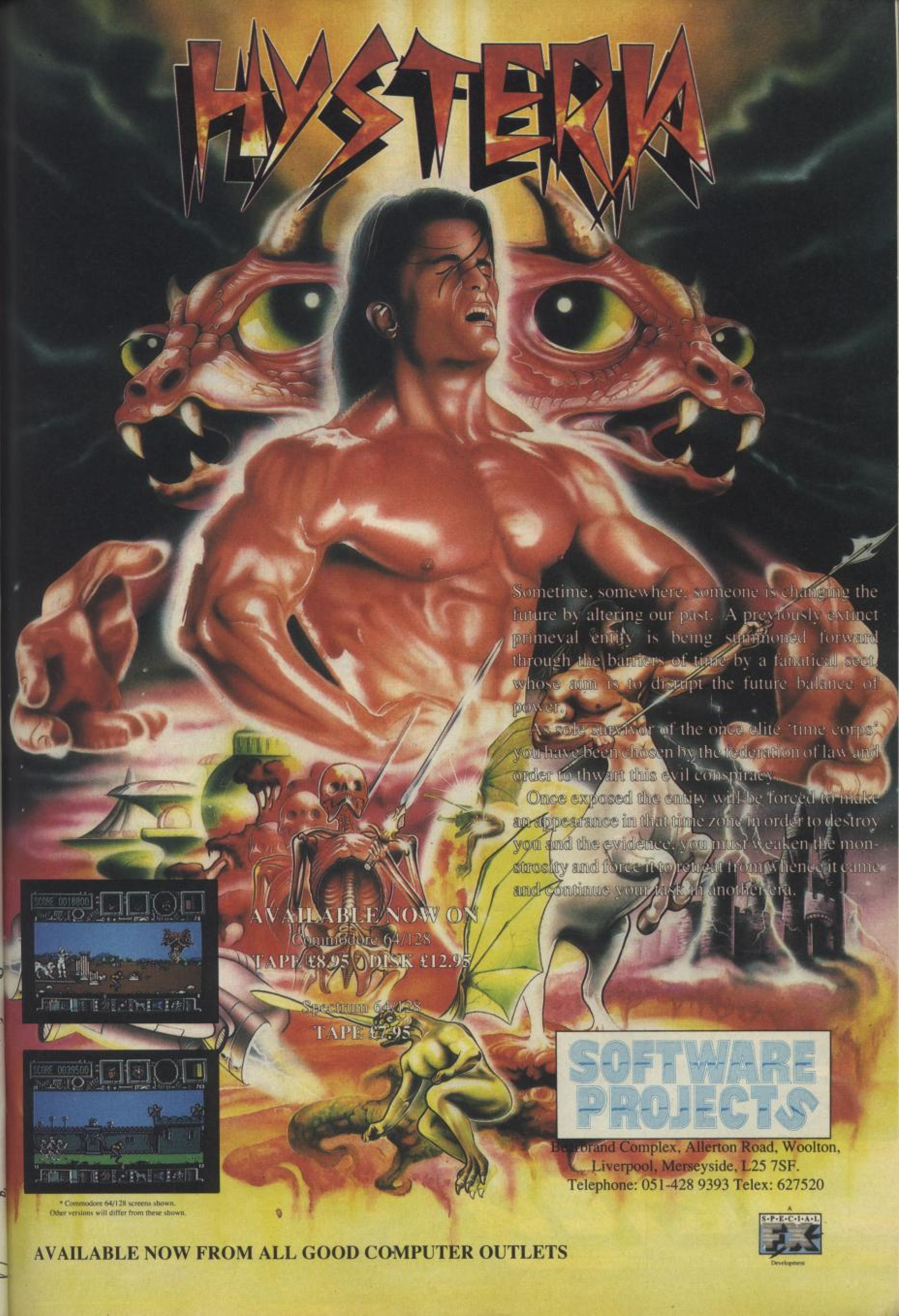
VTX Editor is only £4 and available on Micronet as telesoftware – any VTX-owner missing this must be off his rocker.

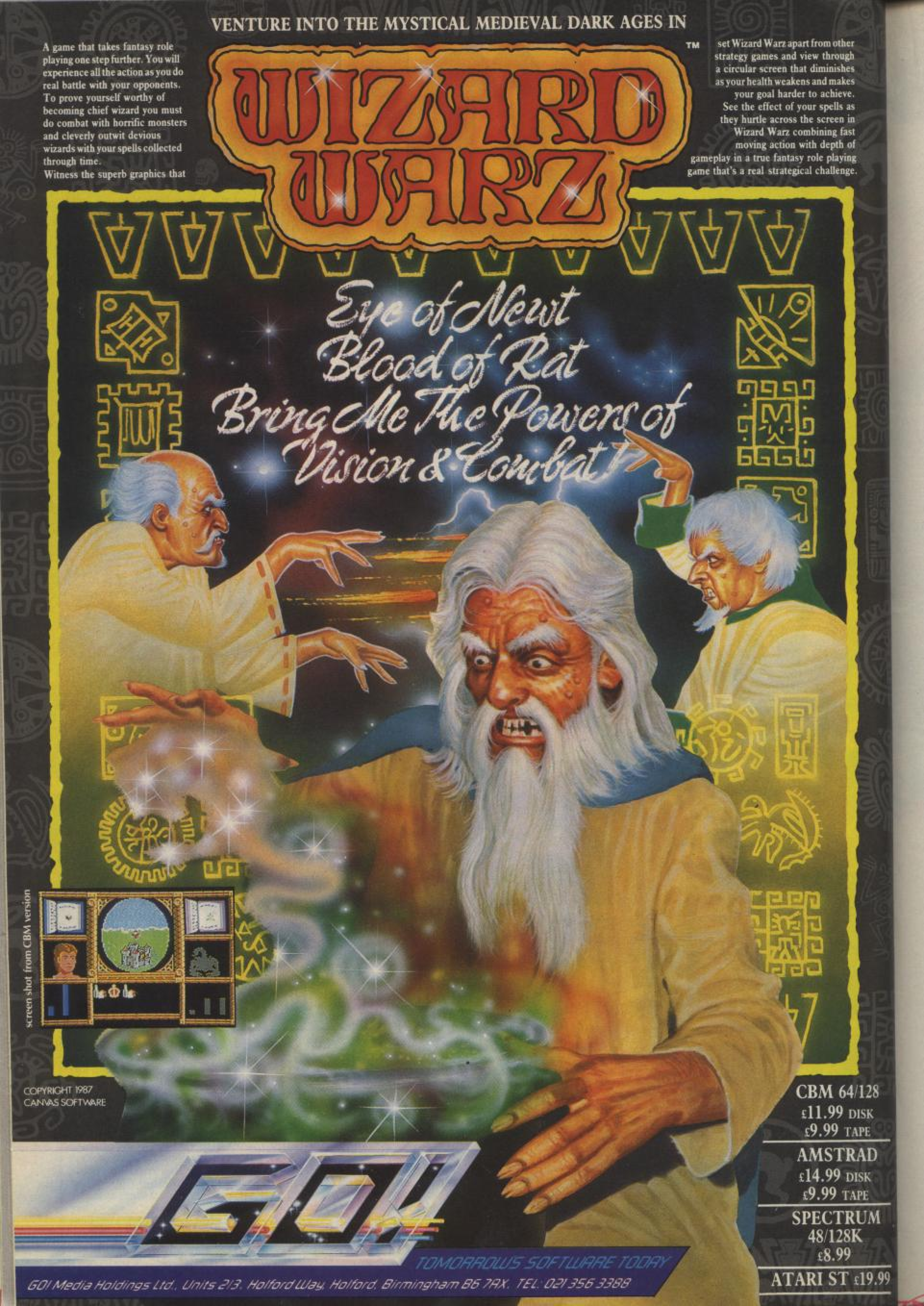
THE EDITOR ON ROM

VTX Editor is very efficient if used on microdrive, but loading it off the tape time and time again can be a bit of a drag. Spectre Comms has produced a version of the software on two 8K ROMs which can be easily installed inside the VTX. The *VTX Editor* software then comes on instantly on power-up.

This version of the editor has all the features mentioned above, and is available from Spectre Comms at £22.95 (including VAT).




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Sometime, somewhere, someone is changing the future by altering our past. A previously extinct primeval entity is being summoned forward through the barriers of time by a fanatical sect, whose aim is to disrupt the future balance of power.
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A game that takes fantasy role playing one step further. You will experience all the action as you do real battle with your opponents. To prove yourself worthy of becoming chief wizard you must do combat with horrific monsters and cleverly outwit devious wizards with your spells collected through time.
Witness the superb graphics that set Wizard Warz apart from other strategy games and view through a circular screen that diminishes as your health weakens and makes your goal harder to achieve. See the effect of your spells as they hurtle across the screen in Wizard Warz combining fast moving action with depth of gameplay in a true fantasy role playing game that's a real strategical challenge.
Eye of Newt
Blood of Rat
Bring Me The Powers of
Vision & Combat!
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DEREK BREWSTER'S Adventure Trail

FUTURE TENSE

PRODUCER: Mystic Software
PRICE: £3
AUTHORS: Christopher Ward and Hugh Steed

There's quite a clever title and concept behind this one – *Future Tense*, a text-only *PAW* adventure, refers to the all-too-plausible collapse of society as values and sensibilities are munched up inside countless computers run by automatons. (At this point in the review I'd just like to say hello to anyone out there in the civil service.)

In this story it's a Dr Fenton Blake who's seen the writing on the wall, or perhaps the curious anomalies in the printout, which moved him to write of his worries for the future in his banned work *What Price Progress?*.

In 2239, when Blake had been quietly gagged for several years already, his greatest fears were realised. The Master Computer attempted to increase efficiency and to eliminate the weakest link in the chain of government – ie the humans – and it set about creating a superhuman race with the collusion of the nuttiest top scientists in the land.

Their first attempts, however, created a whole host of weirdos little better than the bunch they already had, a mutant race of humanoid fruit and vegetables (yes, more civil servants). As the story line goes, these creatures hated the humans who had been devouring their brethren for centuries, and held a particular grudge toward those weedy unhealthy individuals who called themselves vegetarians.

The mutant fruit-and-veg gang broke out of the laboratories and rose up against the western continent of Florabunda; successfully capturing it they renamed the place the Vegetarian Nation. (I do hope you're following this!)



The humans, forced from the vegetable plot, congregated in an adjacent continent and formed a political party, the Society Of Human Preservation or SHP. Its purpose: to hold off the threat from the vegetableheads.

In *Future Tense* you are an agent for the SHP, living in a flat in Silverton, a small city to the north of the eastern continent which has become known as Halfworld.

The first striking thing about *Future Tense* is its friendly and welcoming writing style, both in the instructions and in the game itself. This contrasts nicely with a rather dire view of the future.

You kick off in your flat, which is known to the government as 202 729 GHS 2184 though you prefer to call it home. We soon learn through the well-written and informative location descriptions that you are living on the wrong side of town, where 'Mother Nature has lovingly adorned the walls with a tasteful green fungus'.

As early as the second location we see that the detailed onscreen notes before the game are necessary, as EXAMINE TRENCHCOAT is indeed quite distinct from SEARCH TRENCHCOAT. In *Future Tense* EXAMINE is used to bring out general information about an object, as a cursory glance would, and SEARCH is reserved for a more probing examination. Also, SEARCH relates to a specific object rather than to the general searching of a location which it gives in some games.

And just to be exhaustive on this topic, I'd like to point out that EXAM by itself won't achieve much ('the laws of physics and the nature of society being what they are, you can't do that' is the reaction) – *PAW* has been primed here to work on the first five letters, so EXAMI is the shortest abbreviation for us lazybones.

I'll leave you with some hints for the game provided by programmer Christopher (*The Red Lion*) Ward:

Here's a searching question:
Are you well-equipped?
Because, across the water,
That's where many an agent
slipped.
If you think the press is rubbish
You may well be right
But if you're travelling, it will be
A very welcome sight.
Follow the path of the old tin can
And the broken bottle too
Then if you fight the tyrant
A reward will wait for you.
Before you make arrangements
Be wary, walls have ears
And on your journey go prepared
Or risk two promising careers!
Mutant humanoid fruit and veg
say
'Humans make us rant!'
And this is true, so ask yourself
'Do I make a convincing plant?'
Careful examination,
In true detective style,
Will lead to a revelation
Bringing you closer to Kumber
the Vile.
If clearance is required
Remember Kumber's ego
Act like a Kumber groupie
Then up, up, up we go.
Under detailed scrutiny
Your cover will be blown
So organise a bit of chaos
Then you're on your own.

Mystic Software can be contacted at *67 Fergleen Park, Galliagh, Derry, Northern Ireland BT48 8LF*.

DIFFICULTY: verses make it a little easier
GRAPHICS: none
PRESENTATION: OK
INPUT FACILITY: sophisticated *PAW*
RESPONSE: fast
GENERAL RATING: good

Atmosphere	84%
Vocabulary	85%
Logic	83%
Addictive qualities	84%
OVERALL	85%



THE PROSPECTOR and THE CROWN OF RAMHOTEP

PRODUCER: Tartan
PRICE: £2.95
AUTHORS: Tartan

There are some themes that just look winners the moment you see them, and *The Prospector*, the first of two games on this tape, has one of those. Yep! It's a case of gold in them thar hills and a pile of mule's dung to ain'bardy who sez there ain't!

The place: Tombstone Creek. The date: 1849. You join thousands of others in a mad scramble for gold, arriving in this Californian one-horse town typically broke, with nothing more than the filthy shirt on your back. You'll have to use every ounce of your wits to get some money together, buy the necessary equipment, and then set about prospecting.

Then it's just a simple matter of dodging that iron pyrites (fool's gold) and get what's coming to ya – or is it? The assay office, where all claims must be registered, lies in the centre of Tombstone Creek, and it's your heartfelt wish to end up there in the near future – in one piece.

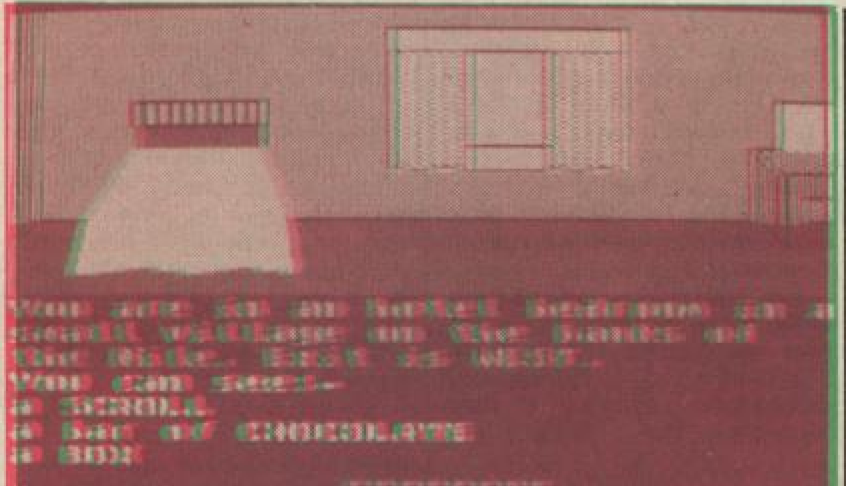
The very name of Tombstone Creek might suggest a town where shoot-outs are the order of the day, but you're far more likely to bow out of the game early due to the sheriff's enthusiasm for a well-ordered town. Hence, drinking the whisky you find in the saloon will see you incarcerated in the town's jail for 30 days, and the same sentence is given for pinching the lawman's hat. Either offence forces an early exit from the game.

The rest of *The Prospector* involves one or two tricky manoeuvres which will get you put in jail again if you don't get them exactly right.

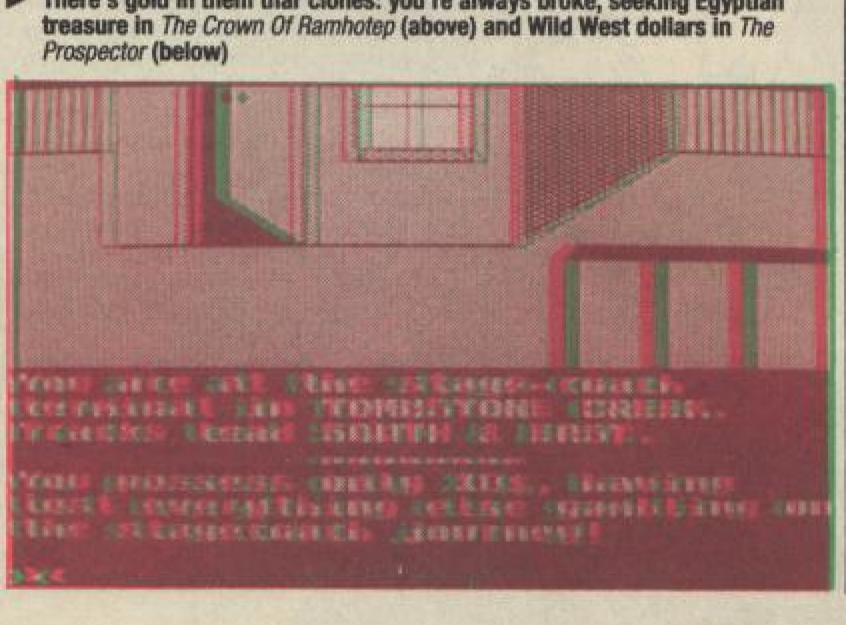
It's a smart enough *Quill*ed game, with reasonable (though slow) graphics and a helpful beep to inform the player when the picture-drawing is at last complete. Perhaps the redesigned character set is a shade modern-looking for a story set in old California, but at least it's very readable.

The plot and the way it unravels are just that bit too obvious at times, but the actual nitty-gritty is surprisingly convoluted and will give even experienced adventurers a run for their money. There are still one or two typographical errors on my preproduction copy, but perhaps all will be well by the time *The Prospector* is released.





► There's gold in them thar clones: you're always broke, seeking Egyptian treasure in *The Crown Of Ramhotep* (above) and Wild West dollars in *The Prospector* (below)



THE CROWN OF RAMHOTEP

Now for the second part of this two-parter, *The Crown Of Ramhotep*.

Some time ago you received by carrier a package containing an ancient scroll, a curious box, and a letter from an old friend, a well-known archaeologist. The letter reads as follows:

Dear John
As you may have heard I have been excavating in Egypt and I have made a remarkable discovery. I have found the Crown Of Ramhotep. I was fortunate to escape but had to leave the crown inside the pyramid. I intend to set out on another expedition to the pyramid as soon as possible. Please come and assist me to retrieve this fabulous treasure. I suggest you come here to the village on the Nile



where we met last year and then journey south to the oasis. All being well, we can share the glory of the discovery together.
Yours sincerely
Bill

Needless to say, with an offer of adventure like that you soon set off with your car and as much loot as you can scrape together. Unwisely, however, you spend most of your money on frivolous pleasures during the cruise to Egypt, so you begin the game just off the boat in a cheap hotel.

As in *The Prospector*, in *The Crown Of Ramhotep* you can call up help at the end of the instructions and before the game itself is loaded. But just to remind you of your self-inflicted plight the first help line is 'Remember you're broke! You will need some money'.

The Crown Of Ramhotep is almost an exact copy of *The Prospector* in style, right down to the redefined character set. The slowly-drawn pictures are still here, as is the rather obvious plot (though there's nothing wrong with a plot which runs smoothly!).

A couple of obscure vocabulary solutions to problems will ensure that even hardened adventurers find the game exacting; indeed, some might find the obvious plot pathways mixed with a few difficult problems a good blend.

I think the two games on this Tartan tape can be marked together; though *The Crown Of Ramhotep* might have a marginally better EXAMINE command, for example, they're very similar in structure, style and quality. I can't wholeheartedly recommend the pair to most gamers – they just don't show enough novel features (it would be nice if the maps mentioned in the games came onscreen, or something).

But the kind of adventurer who collects most of what's going on should by all means send off for these to Tartan at *61 Bailie Norrie Crescent, Montrose, Angus DD10 9DT*.

Like all utility adventures, *The Prospector* and *The Crown Of Ramhotep* are competent and there are few distractions from solving the puzzles.

DIFFICULTY: mostly obvious, but some very tricky parts
GRAPHICS: average, slow
PRESENTATION: OK
INPUT FACILITY: verb/noun
RESPONSE: fast, but slow graphics
GENERAL RATING: competent

Atmosphere	69%
Vocabulary	68%
Logic	72%
Addictive qualities	72%
OVERALL	71%

KARYSSIA QUEEN OF DIAMONDS

PRODUCER: Incentive
PRICE: £7.95
AUTHORS: D &R Shacklady

For what seems like all summer long the big boys have kept well clear of adventures, so it was with interest that I loaded up *Karyssia* from Incentive. The packaging is rather plain, but this Medallion Adventure, written using Incentive's own *Graphic Adventure Creator* (*GAC*) is graphically quite attractive.

Superficially it'll be the crisp 3-D pictures which attract the adventurer, but *Karyssia* has many highly sophisticated features such as speech, magic, cabalism (spoken magic), combat with a huge variety of weapons, and a full story – all will help its successful launch into the adventurer's imagination.

The Isle Of Senduarin was once a very pleasant land with famous diamond mines. Under the wise rule of the 'smiling monarch' King Merenon I, the wealth from the precious stones was spread throughout his peoples.

Prophets, however, predicted doom in the form of the king's first-born, and when the princess Karyssia was born the prophets, convinced of their infallibility, made an abortive attempt on her life.

Later, two more daughters – Anassia and Sarassia – were born to the king.

On his death Karyssia became queen and proved a wise ruler. But there were rumours of the diamond mines running down, and the people of Senduarin became aware of their real plight. The money to transform Senduarin into a self-sufficient agricultural state was to be found in Karyssia's vast wealth, but for a while the island had to rely on its near neighbours, Arduarin and Tresduarin, for food.

Karyssia's generosity with her fortune made her ever more popular, but the truth was that the prophets had been right all along – only Karyssia and her sisters knew that the diamonds had NOT run out.

Meanwhile on Arduarin, the largest of the three islands, there was turmoil. Three fighters had cut down the king and assumed control. They were extremely unpopular, so Karyssia seized her chance and offered the fighters a large sum to leave their island. This they gladly accepted and Karyssia took over the throne of Arduarin with its people's approval.

Soon Karyssia and her sisters controlled all three islands, using aggression and tyranny to retain power. Karyssia set up a huge army to control the disgruntled peoples and herself became skilled in swordplay. She appointed 12 bodyguards and a court wizard, the evil Sindowa, to protect her. Her summary justice emanated from the Royal Castle in the north of Arduarin, set high in the Altivian Mountains near Stillwater Lake. This lake, set in a high plateau, is said to hold strange powers . . .

The rightful heir to the throne of Arduarin, Loranin, has asked you to kill Karyssia. This will involve a long journey to the Royal Castle. You begin the adventure in the Sword & Bucket Inn in Mottinan, the southernmost town of Tresduarin. You should endeavour to travel across this island, pass through Senduarin and go on to the far north, to the Ativian Mountains and Karyssia.

Your first rendezvous is with Loranin in a cove, and so you quickly sup up and take your leave of the innkeeper of the Sword & Bucket.

How you react to the characters you meet in the game will depend upon how they present themselves, but just in

► In a 3-D world of war and complex magic, the tale of *Karyssia* unfolds





case they want to get aggressive you have the option to attack them. This can be risky, though – you can't retreat from a battle once your opponent is engaged.

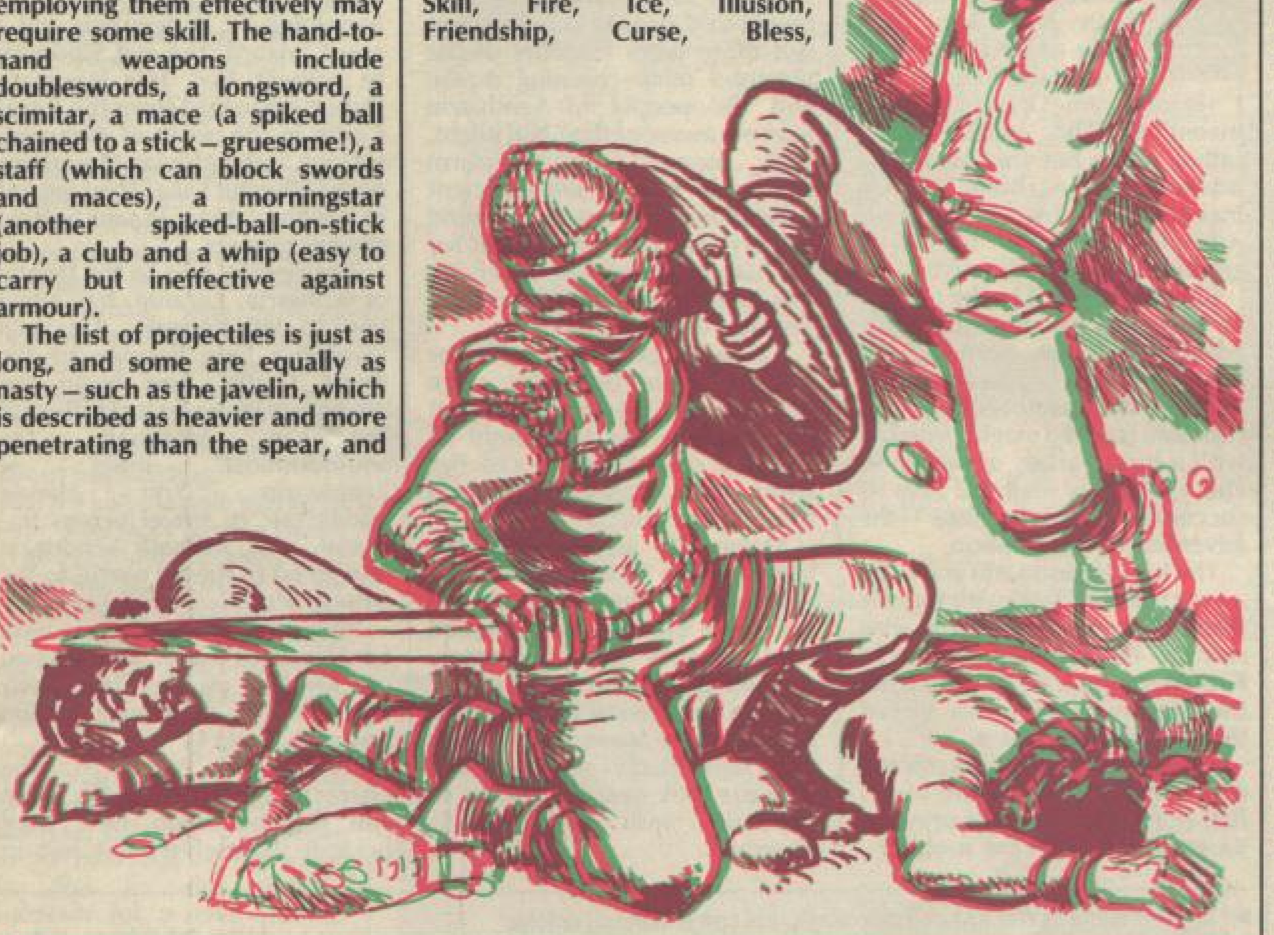
Naturally enough, the victor is usually the more able of the fighters, determined by comparing skill and stamina ratings. (Your own status can be monitored with STATUS.)

There are two types of weapon: hand-to-hand weapons and projectiles. Hand-to-hand weapons increase your ability in combat but projectiles don't, and employing them effectively may require some skill. The hand-to-hand weapons include doubleswords, a longsword, a scimitar, a mace (a spiked ball chained to a stick – gruesome!), a staff (which can block swords and maces), a morningstar (another spiked-ball-on-stick job), a club and a whip (easy to carry but ineffective against armour).

The list of projectiles is just as long, and some are equally as nasty – such as the javelin, which is described as heavier and more penetrating than the spear, and the flyingstar, a star-edged disc with fingerholes. Used only by the best fighters, the flyingstar is deadly when tipped with poison.

In the world of magic there are three levels: lower plane, higher plane and executive plane (it's exclusive plane actually, but I couldn't resist the joke). Lower planes are widely available, higher-plane spells are expensive and used by rich fighters, and exclusive planes are useful only to wizards.

Lower-plane spells are chosen from quite a long list: Stamina, Skill, Fire, Ice, Illusion, Friendship, Curse, Bless, Blindness, Remove, Growth, Invisibility, Fear, Levitation. Probably the most interesting of the higher-plane spells is the Dispel Magic Spell, which wipes out lower-plane magic.



To cast a spell, CAST (type) SPELL ON (object), as in CAST CURSE SPELL ON INNKEEPER, or simply CAST CURSE where the object is obvious.

That curious word 'cabalism' here refers to spoken magic. It usually involves an amulet and is cast on an object. If you know a cabalistic spell, and you are in possession of the amulet, then you can use it by saying the spell to the object, as in DIAMOND (SPELL). This format follows that of all speech in *Karyssia*, as in FLORASSIA HELLO, or INNKEEPER GIVE ME A DRINK.

The Ultimate-style 3-D graphics are the first thing you notice in *Karyssia*: you see the picture by looking down obliquely through the two nearest walls, which are presented as see-through. The doors in these walls are marked only by their ghostly frames. Along with the very smart redesigned character set, these pictures, though sparse and often repeating items of furniture, give the game an attractive appearance.

As for gameplay, there are no midcompass directions like NE, SE and so on, which are often missing from *GAC* games. There are one or two places where you might be puzzled as to why you can't pick up an item – the acorn at the tree, for example, or the 25 gold pieces – but this is because you already possess such items as soon as you meet them.

Another problem: there might be a little warning tucked away in the instructions, but I found out the hard way that L, intended by me to mean LOOK, sent the program into LOAD mode. You can quickly get out of the situation by BREAKing, but for a moment the program has you hopping mad . . .

Karyssia is a fine adventure with many admirable features. The pretty 3-D graphics are thin on the ground, and the location descriptions aren't the most evocative I've read, but the plot, which unwinds along three separately-loading parts, holds the attention marvellously.



DIFFICULTY: not difficult
GRAPHICS: few, but very pretty
PRESENTATION: good, clean
INPUT FACILITY: basically verb/noun
RESPONSE: reasonably fast
GENERAL RATING: good

Atmosphere	**81%**
Vocabulary	**85%**
Logic	**83%**
Addictive quality	**88%**
OVERALL	**87%**





GAC AGAIN

Dear Signpost
After reading Ian Bryer's letter in the July CRASH about *GAC*, I decided to put pen to paper. I'd like to make an addition to the bit about repeat descriptions. I applied the short routine to one of my own games but I found something wrong with it – I could only use it for one repeat description. After fiddling about with it I came up with a simple alteration:

```
IF (AT(ROOM$1) OR AT
(ROOM$2) OR AT
(ROOM$3). . . . SET?(0))
MESS (MESSAGE) END
```

This can now be repeated for different descriptions. Put RESE 0 END at the end of the whole high-priority area as a separate line.

My second point is on the same lines. By using the counter function you can set up a sort of two-dimensional array to make a maze, ie in a wood or following winding tunnels etc.

```
IF (AT (ROOM1) AND
VBNO = (DIRECTION)
GOTO (ROOMX) X CSET
1 Y CSET 2 END
IF (AT (ROOM1) AND
VBNO = (DIRECTION))
INCR/DECR 1/2 END
```

Repeat this for all directions. If you include NE,SE,SW,NW in the maze, then both counters must be altered, ie INCR or DECR 1 and 2, depending on the direction. X and Y determine the position you begin on the x- and y-coordinates, eg 5 CSET 1 4 CSET 2 would start you five locations up and four locations across on the maze map. You only have to define one room, eg ROOM 100.

You're lost, deep in a spectacular forest full of the voices of birds and insects.

CONNECTIONS
N 100 NE 100 E 100 SE 100
S 100 SW 100 W 100 NW 100
(This room is defined as ROOM X – see earlier)

Now you could have a huge forest or tunnel network or whatever, up to 255*255 (the maximum size of counter) or you could make the maze wrap around, ie

```
IF (CTR X (< OR >) Y) X
CSET Z END
```

where X is the specified counter and Y is the maximum distance you can travel, or vice versa. To leave the maze you must include lines such as

```
IF (CTR X = 3 AND CTR Y
= 5 AND VBNO = (DI-
RECTION) GOTO Z END
```

where X and Y are the position counters, and Z is the room you wish to enter from the maze.

These lines must be put into the high-priority area in the order stated.

Finally, I would like to point out a useful way of using the CONN condition. Instead of putting the directions at the end of every room description, just make out the directions as messages, ie UP, DOWN, NORTH, EAST, SOUTH, WEST, SOUTHEAST, SOUTHWEST, NORTHEAST, NORTHWEST (each direction a separate message). Then in the high-priority conditions enter for each direction

```
IF ( CONN (DIRECTION
VBNO) > 0 AND SET?0)
MESS (APPROPRIATE
DIRECTION) END
```

Before this you could also have a message, eg 'Exits lead -'. But the following line

```
IF (SET?0) MESS (EXITS
LEAD - ) END
```

must come before the connection table is checked and all this must come before the final high-priority line RESE 0 END.

Darrell Smith, S Yorks

PAW ADVICE

Dear Derek
Here are some tips on how to use Gilsoft's brilliant utility, *PAW*.

CONTAINERS
First put your container's name in nouns with a value of 50 or higher so it will be recognised as 'it'. Put in the object text the name of your container and note down its number. Under Object Weights remember to put it as a container. Under Words put its noun and adjective (if it has one). Insert the Location with the same number as the object and leave it blank, ie object 7 - Location 7. Put the following into response:

```
I PUT – 0
PREP IN NOUN2 (container)
PRESENT (container number)
AUTOP (location of inside of
container) DONE
```

For example,

```
PREP IN NOUN2 BAG PRE-
SENT7 AUTOP7 DONE
I GET – 0
PREP OUT NOUN2 BAG PRE-
SENT7 AUTOP7 DONE
I LOOK BAG
PREP IN MESSAGE2 LISTAT7
DONE
```

where message 2 is 'In the bag is:'

INTRODUCTION SCREEN
To make a tune play as soon as the game has loaded go to Process1 and:

```
I * *
AT 0 BEEP 10 150 BEEP 10
100 BEEP 10 50 BEEP 10
100 BEEP 10 150 PAUSE
15 BEEP 10 100 BEEP 10
100 (or your own little
tune).
```

Also, to make your game look more professional key this into Process1:

```
I * *
AT 0 ANYKEY GOTO 1
DESC
```

GRAPHICS
Remember always to select default colours for the pictures – otherwise they are treated as subroutines. When drawing subroutines always remember to remove the plots that you use. Otherwise they will be only drawn at the same spot, ie if you plot a subroutine at 197 56 you cannot put it anywhere else on a personal picture – only at 197 56.

MONEY
If you want a currency in your game choose a flag to hold the number of coins carried and insert two messages: 'I am carrying' and 'coins', so that if flag 100 held the number of coins and the messages were 1 and 2 a condact could read

```
MESSAGE1 PRINT 100
MESSAGE2 DONE.
```

I hope these notes help some budding adventure-writers.

Stephen Flint, Nottingham

Stephen wins this month's £30 worth of software – yes, they've finally given me more money for the prize!

DB





MORDON'S QUEST

'Who is the king of the jungle?' wonders **LES MILLAR**. *Flicking through my files I reckon you might give Tarzan a go. (Thanks to E GODWIN.)*

'And how do I get past the barrier in the future complex?' *Admantium barrier: let your fingers do the walking.*

ALLAN PRICE wonders how to get past the invisible barrier and how to repair the reactor droid.

Pray a little longer, and in space age get the geiger counter and go to Rome and the barn. Type look and insert the battery into the droid.

THE HOBBIT

NICK HUNT wants to know what to do once Bard has killed the red dragon, assuming you have the treasure.

Take the treasure and keep going south and down till you meet some pale bulbous eyes. Go in the direction you were heading in once, then wait twice, and go in the direction you were going in again. When you get past the pale eyes you will be able to get back to where you started. (JASON LIMBER)

APACHE GOLD

How do you
1 get into the canoe by the fast river?
2 get the shiny thing off the totem pole?
3 find the word you say to the great white spirit to get to the mountain base?

rattles off **NICK HUNT**.

1 To scare the crocodile show handbag. Paddle the canoe with the branch.
2 Go to the totem pole with the ants nest. Wait for ant to bite you.
3 Enter the secret word from the smoke signal at the pearly wigwam. (GEOFF BLAKEY)

THE VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE

'How do I get the goblet from the troll and the treasures in Gotham?' wonders **ALLAN PRICE**.

Use the water pellet (provided you have a bottle of water). The pellet will turn into an art critic and cause the parser to overheat. This destroys the troll allowing you to get the jewel-encrusted goblet. Leave museum and go E,S, to jewellers, enter and get tiara.

CUSTERDS QUEST

STEPHEN ROUTLEY asks
1 How do I get past the peasants and back to the castle (south) or straight on (north)?
2 Can you get out of the tunnels past the panel – if so, how?

1 Throw can and the peasants scramble in the mud after it while you escape.
2 Wait ten times, and you will be given the lamp, light lamp, E,E, get treasure, W,W, up.

'I have reached the obese time beast and he needs a watch before any other progress is made. I then found the white rabbit and tried to get his watch, but every time I enter his hall, he rips my throat out,' writes **ROBERT COLLIER**.

The white rabbit takes your box of Turkish delight and hands you a gold watch. He pigs the box of chocs and dies – the snow queen poisoned them. (Thanks to ANDREW EDNEY for the Custerds Quest *tips.)*

BORED OF THE RINGS

'Could you tell me how to follow the map I bought from the pixie in *Bored Of The Rings* at Moronas Maze? Also, please tell me the password to Part Three' – **ANDREW DOUGLAS**.

Go E from the pixie, E again, N,E,E,S,W,S,W,S,W,S,W,S. Trevor and Derek. (STUART SMITH)

SHADOWS OF MORDOR

ANTHONY MOTTERAM is left wandering around the first few locations.

The first thing to do is to find Smeagol. Just wander about and he should come to you. Ask Sam to give you the rope, then enter KILL SMEAGOL, then tie up Smeagol. The ugly creature will plead with you to remove the rope. Enter SAY TO SAM, NO and PROMISE. Untie the rope and Smeagol will follow you. Go to the tree and enter BREAK TREE about four times till the tree is broken. Take the branch and go to the lumpy rock. Lever the rock north, then east with the branch. Go to the round rock and lever it east, then over the cliff. Tie the rope to the lumpy rock. Climb down this rope and you will be in the swamp. (PAUL GOODWIN)

THE BIG SLEAZE

'Please could you tell me how to start the car. I have already blown up the safe,' writes **DANIEL SMITH**.

Touch two wires together to start the car.

THE BOGGIT

STUART VIZARD has killed the dragon in this CRL adventure but can't seem to do much else and wonders if this is the end of the game.

Go S till you get to the narrow path down. Go down then S till you fall down the waterfall.





Wear the ring. Wait for somebody to open the door, then go W. Examine the magic door, then go W into Part One. Return to Fag End. Open the chest, climb into the chest, drop the treasure. (RAVI SRINIVASAN)

Should you encounter the space cruiser full of aliens it is best to give them what they need, ie the barkenstone. (JOHN WILSON)

BEN WOOD inquires:

How do you light the torch?

How do you lever the cannon with the seesaw?

At the start of Part Two, dig sand to discover the trap door. In the goblin's dungeon, EXAM TORCH to discover the battery and then insert battery into the sword found inside the trolls' cauldron. (JOHN WILSON)

Use the piece of strong wood, formerly the mast, to lever the cannon. (P A DUCKER)

S REFAULT also has two or three problems:

How do you kill the trolls in the clearing?

How do you open the rock door?

How do you start the boat as the starting cord is missing?

To get the trolls out of the way, the theologist's riddle must be solved. Well, the lux is a measure of light and is also a brand of soap flakes. So the first thing to type when you meet the trolls is LUX and hey presto – they turn to putty. Adventurers familiar with The Hobbit *will know they must now get the stone key to open the stone door to the trolls' apartment. (SIMON GEORGE)*

SEABASE DELTA

BEN WOOD wants to know where he can get into some heavy metal.

The tape is to be found in the computer memory banks. (MATTHEW TUCKER)

THE PAWN

STEVEN YATES has reached the guru but isn't sure how to interpret the wise sage's teachings. He asks 'What does the guru want and where can I find some light?'

Go to the plateau and fill the bowl with snow. The guru gives you a clue about where to find some light. Mix primary colours to get white. (MALCOLM R BUCHANAN)

HAMPSTEAD

CHRISTOPHER EVANS offers his three pennies' worth:

1 'What train do I have to go on to meet Justin Perrier?'

2 'How do I get a job?'

3 'When I try to force the cabinet I am told I can't do that . . . '

1 Buy pass and go to Platform One.

2 Wear tie to get in the gentlemen's club. When asked your name, remember who you are pretending to be. Agree to the offer of a job.

3 Use screwdriver to prise open cabinet. (STEPHEN ELLIS)

KEVIN MOONEY is having difficulty getting in and out of the industrial estate.

At the entrance go N,E,E,NE,E,E,NE, then N. Get the bracket and then SW. (NEIL F MCCABE)

Exit with E,E,E,NE,E,N,S into the high street. (R HILLS)

HUMAN TORCH AND THE THING

STEVEN ROWELL wonders how you fire the cannon and how you get into the castle past Blob.

Aim cannon at Blob, fire cannon at Blob. Throw high flame at Blob.

SORCEROR OF CLAYMORGUE CASTLE

S ROWELL: 'How do you actually dry the towel?'
Squeeze towel twice.

REBEL PLANET

CHRISTOPHER MORELAND is trying to get to grips with the wrench.

1 'Where is the wrench?'

2 'What is the alloy strip for?'

1 Give tickets to the Arcadians.

2 Bend alloy strip you find in the cargo bay to make a pair of tweezers. (JOHN WILSON)

LAURENCE CRIGHTON wants the name of the chap who sent him through the sewer. *It's Saros.* **(MARTIN DRUMMEY)**

URBAN UPSTART

'I've got all that can be got. I've given the fan the £5 and the lager, but nothing happens and I can't get over the muddy sight or get past the fan' asks someone whose name I've mislaid.

Give the fan the lager, take the trip and go to the side of the bank where the service till is. Put the cheese in the trap, insert card and type in the number 1001. Take the £5 and the tape from the hill near the hospital. (DAVID WILLIAMS)

EUREKA!

CHRISTOPHER MORELAND is obviously a little late for the Domark prize for *Eureka!*, **but he's having a go for the sheer hell of it. His queries:**

Prehistoric Man

1 What use is the ruby?

2 How do you kill the mammoth?

1 In Kogo's hut, offer ruby.

2 Drop mouse to scare them off. (DEAN STEELE)

Arthurian Britain

How do you defeat the wolf?

Give the wolf a headache. (B COATES)

VALKYRIE 17

ANDY GREEN wants to know how to start the plane in the hangar.

To refuel the plane find fuel under the straw and fill tank with fuel. Open the hanger doors before starting the plane. Type TAKE OFF, not forgetting to wear your parachute. (MARTIN DRUMMEY)

WINTER WONDERLAND

'Atchoo! That's me in *Winter Wonderland*. **I can get into the so-called Wonderland and that's as far as I can go. I tried selling the egg to the professor but he just ignored me. Eventually I gave it to him and he disappeared with nothing more than a 'thank you'. So here I am, cold, lonely (even the passers-by won't talk to me), no money, having snowballs banged at me and now eggless. What am I to do? Please help me!' pleads PAUL HARTSHORN from subtropical South Devon.**

Sell egg and you find the value of your cashcard (from the hotel room by the foyer) has increased by 150 credits. (STEVEN HOUSE)

MATT LUCAS

IAN BRAZIER: 'How do I open the safe, use note, ignition keys, meat, empty container and tube, and is there anything important about the warehouse?'

Tip vase, read note (which gives the number for the safe). Take gun. Insert key on boat. The meat is for the alsatians. Go to the petrol station and insert tube. The map is found at the warehouse. (MIKE PARK)

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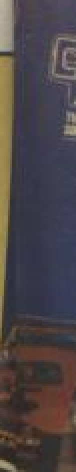
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4 MAY *The Quill* analysed • the fabled ZX Microdrive appears • Run It Again: *Pengo* games • graphics utilities • Living Guide: boardgames, simulations, strategy, adventure • the second-earliest surviving back number!! *(that's enough early back numbers – Ed)*

1985

17 JUN Denton Designs • Sinclair Story 3 • Maps: *Knight Lore, Underwurlde* • Leonardo Graphics • Datel sound sampler • Artist: David Thorpe
18 JUL Gremlin Graphics profile • Artist: Bob Wakelin • Map: *Gyron Atrium*
19 AUG CRL profile • Oliposter • roundup of BASIC compilers • Artist: Rich Shenfield • Maps: *Dynamite Dan, Shadowfire*
20 SEP Electronic Pencil Company profile • Maps: *Alien 8, Dun Darach*
21 OCT Holografix profile • Holograms • Map: *Nodes Of Yesod* • Platinum Productions profile
22 NOV Fanzine File • Microdrive tips • Artist: Susan Rowe • Fantasy Gamebooks
23 DEC Melbourne House • Computer graphics • Artist: Dave Beeson
24 XMAS 1985/6 Artist: Oliver Frey • Gargoyle Games profile • Lloyd's Lookback • Hewson profile

1986

25 FEB Durell profile • Microsphere • FORTH and extensions to ZX BASIC
26 MAR St Bride's profile • Spectrum 128 • Micronet 800 • Multiface 1
27 APR Playing Tips supplement • Mel Croucher • Imagine profile • PBM convention
28 MAY Fanzines • Martech profile • Composite Video Interface • SpecDrum
29 JUN First PBM Mailbox • Homegrown software • Realtime profile • Maps: *Cylu, Sir Fred, Saboteur, Tantalus*
30 JUL Birth of a game • Laser Genius • Maps: *Tantalus, Movie*
31 AUG Software Projects • Word processing • Maps: *Pentagram, Heavy On The Magick*
32 SEP Programmer: Dave Perry • *GAC* • Maps: *Core, Ghosts 'n' Goblins, Bobby Bearing* • Echo Synthesizer
33 OCT Programmers: Jon Ritman, Costa Panayi • Maps: *Dan Dare, Cauldron II* • SpecDrumming
34 NOV Programmer: Don Priestley • Genesis Update • Maps: *Dynamite Dan II, Equinox, Universal Hero* • Music Machine
35 DEC Designer: Dan Malone • Computer Advertising • Maps: *Glider Rider, Thrust, Lightforce* • MIDI
36 XMAS 1986/87 Lloyd's Lookback • Spectrum Music • Maps: *Scooby Doo, Heartland, Druid*

1987

37 FEB John Richardson: Jetman • CRASH Reviewers revealed • *Match Day* Challenge • Maps: *Fairlight II, Firelord, Avenger, Dandy*
38 MAR Fanzines • Designer: Bernie Drummond • Maps: *Cobra, Impossaball, Uridium* • MIDI
39 APR Arcades update • The Z88 • Programmer: Steve Taylor • Maps: *Nosferatu, Double Take, Future Knight, Feud*
40 MAY Terminal Man returns • Playing Tips Supplement • Maps: *Short Circuit, Antiriad, Con-Quest, Into The Eagle's Nest, Sceptre Of Bagdad, Dragon's Lair II, Thrust II, Fat Worm Blows A Sparky, Tarzan, Aliens*
41 JUN Programmer: Mike Singleton • Industry today • Adventure Trail Supplement • Maps: *Saboteur II, Head Over Heels* • Multitrackers • 128 bugs
42 JUL 16-page *OINK!* pull-out • *Living Daylights* film FX • Programmer: Pete Cooke • Maps: *Auf Wiedersehen Monty, Hydrofool, Rasterscan*
43 AUG The +3 arrives • Run It Again runs the *Gauntlet* clones • Big trouble at *The Bug* • CRASHtionnaire results • CRL's *3D Gamemaker* • Maps: *Enduro Racer, Flash Gordon*
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SPRITE & SOUND

The days of the lonely programming artist are over. Now there's a new breed of specialists – Spectrum painters and sound-chip composers who help the gameplay come to life. RICHARD EDDY reports.

A PIXEL IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

THE GRAPHICS SPECIALISTS

EVERYONE knew the Spectrum had limited graphic capabilities when it was launched, so nobody really tried to push them. There was no demand for graphic specialists – programmers considered graphics just a part of their job.

Probably the first graphic milestone was *Manic Miner*, and everyone went a bit gaga over that. So *Manic Miner* author Matthew Smith designed the graphics for Bug-Byte's next release, *The Birds And The Bees*.

It looked like the Spectrum could make pretty pictures. In the summer of 1984 *Sabre Wulf* hit the screens, and it's still one of most colourful games around. Programmers began realising that graphics could make or break a game and began calling upon their mates who knew a bit about art. Graphic specialists had arrived.

Binary Design is now a large programming house employing 30 people. Its own subdivision Binary Sight has five full-time graphic artists: Steve Pickford, Lee Corley, Nick Speakman, Lindon Brooke, Chris Collins and Jason Nelson, the coordinator. *Amaurote*, one of the team's most visually pleasing games, was the graphic creation of Steve Pickford and took him three weeks to complete.

Says Binary Design's Managing Director Andy Hickey: '*Amaurote* began life, as does any project, with a week-long brainstorm session in which the majority of the graphics are sketched out. From there Steve begins work with Binary Design's sprite designer.'

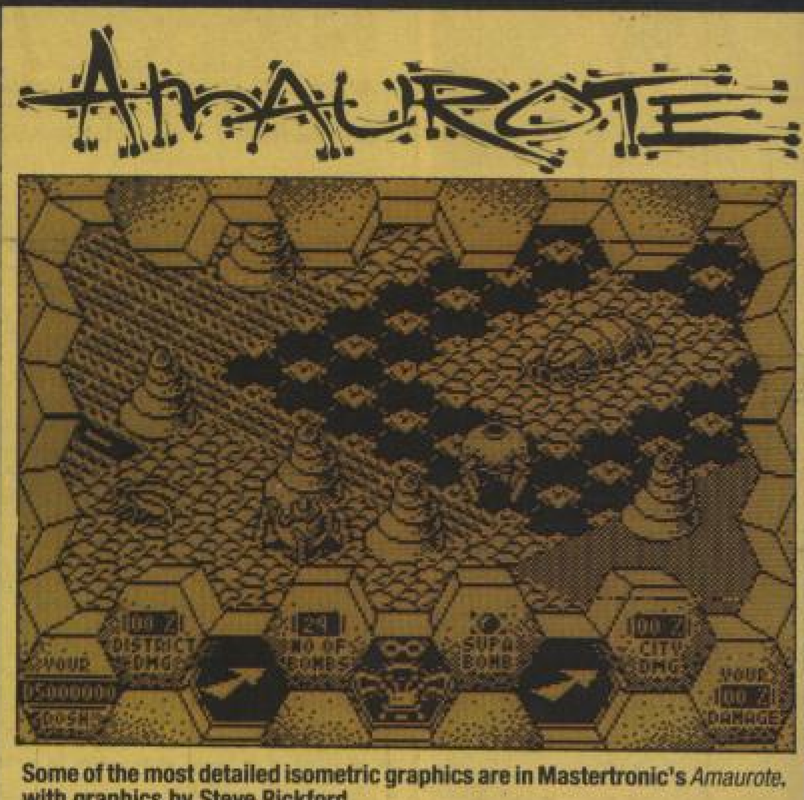
Graphics are inserted into the game when it's almost finished.

HEAD OVER HEELS OVER HEAD OVER HEELS

Some graphic artists work together with one particular programmer, specialising in one kind of graphics. Jon Ritman's erstwhile art minion Bernie Drummond was responsible for all the graphics in Ocean's *Batman* and *Head Over Heels*. His particular style comes from his love of cartoon illustration, and he taught himself art, because he felt conventional teaching methods were limited.

Drummond had never touched a computer before working on *Batman*, and maybe that explains why his style is so unique. He has a free hand in the graphics he designs as long as they fit in with Ritman's scenario – the only constraint he works under is the 24-pixel character blocks in which all his graphics have to be drawn.

And there's money in designing graphics when you're as competent as Bernie Drummond – he hopes to get £14,000 from *Head Over Heels*.



Some of the most detailed isometric graphics are in Mastertronic's *Amaurote*, with graphics by Steve Pickford



Graphics man Colin Grunes created Firebird's *Heartland* – after he'd developed the look, Steve Whetherill wrote a game around it. The atmospheric graphics save it from being just another maze game.

Sometimes graphic artists design graphics first and then a game is built around it. That happened to Colin Grunes when he designed the graphics for Odin's *Heartland*, released by Firebird. His partner in programming, Steve Whetherill, devised a game to suit the graphics – the result was one CRASH Smash (Issue 31).

Grunes's other works include *Nodes Of Yesod* and, more recently, *Sidewize* for Firebird. He's using the ageing *Melbourne Draw* utility to create the graphics for *Sidewize II*, which he likens to Salamander with, he hopes, some animated backdrops. (We'll have a preview on that soon, Lloyd willing.)

SPINACH POWER

Some programmers don't need specialists working for them. One such is Don Priestley of *Popeye*, *Trap Door* and *Flunky* fame. He says: 'If I had graphic and sound specialists working for me we would spend too much time communicating and not enough time working.'

But Priestley has created a distinctive style in his recent games. His well-known large-cartoon style of graphics was born unintentionally: 'When I was developing *Popeye* for DK Tronics, King Features Inc, the licence-holders, demanded that Popeye had to look distinctly like his cartoon counterpart, complete with the right colour socks, hat and pipe.

'The only way this could be achieved successfully was to make the figures 11 characters high. Moving something of that size takes up a lot of the screen and so adding a foreground and background (making it pseudo-3-D) was brought in – but that didn't stop the game being slow.'

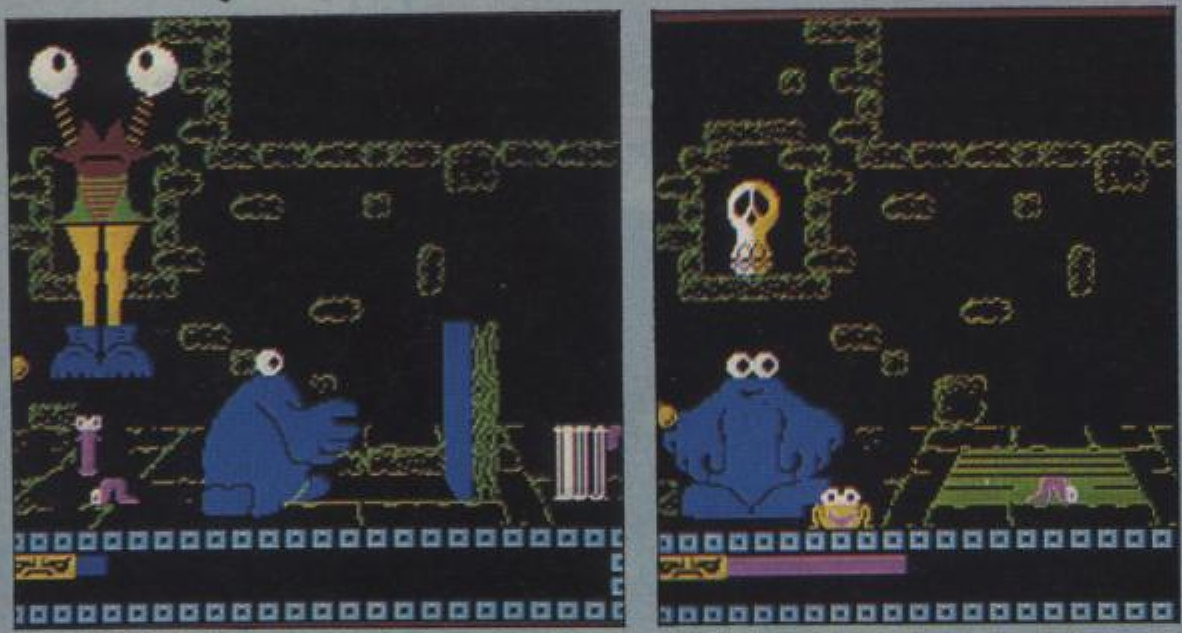
But Priestley's latest graphics-manipulation routines allow him to make Piranha's *Through The Trap Door* (the sequel to *Trap Door*) a much faster and more action-packed game than his previous work.



'You can cheat as well,' reveals Don. 'Take jumping, for instance. By the law of gravity you go up slower than you go down. So, the speed doesn't really matter on the up and then on the fall you can afford to move the sprite five or six character squares at a time.'

So that's how it's done . . .





The bigger the characters, the less colour clash is likely – but this often results in slow movement. Don Priestley's latest work, *Through The Trap Door*, seems to have got round this problem, and it's faster and furiouser.

PLAYING FOR BEEPS
THE SOUND SPECIALISTS



Dave Whittaker demonstrates how he composed *The Tube*'s theme tune on his piano tie

THE Spectrum BEEP command is pretty useless as it stands. But with the advent of the 128K machine, music became much more of an integral part of Spectrum gaming.

The programmers at Probe Software, who write many games for US Gold, have managed to produce a simulated four-channel sound on the 48K for *Trantor – The Last Stormtrooper* (a demo of which was on last month's CRASH sampler). But all they're saying is 'we downloaded it from an Amiga'!

There are many music specialists working on the Spectrum, though. Dave Whittaker's company, Musicon Design, writes most of the tunes that emit from the 128K music chip these days – his recent work includes *The Living Daylights*, *Glider Rider* and *The Tube*.

He composes his Spectrum tunes with the aid of his own driver (a piece of code that makes the music data run) on an Einstein computer and then downloads the data via a RS232 into an Interface One.

GAME? WHAT GAME?

Whittaker confesses that he rarely sees anything of the games he writes music for – he may be given a general theme or tempo to work from, but after that it's up to him. Occasionally he's given a specific tune to convert; Infogrames once gave him the famous *Chariots Of Fire* theme.

Whittaker's routines can take up anything from half a K for just jingles to 3K, including the Driver.

Any favourite tunes? 'No, I usually end up hating them all after I've spent so much time writing them – though occasionally I'll hear a tune a few months after I've written it and think: 'Yes, I like that, it's good.''

'100K IS ESSENTIAL'

In-house music specialists like Palace Software's Richard Joseph can maintain a distinctive house musical style. And what with all the accolades that were awarded to such Palace games as *Stifflip & Co.*, *Cauldron I* and *II* and *Barbarian*, Richard must be pretty chuffed with himself.

He's a bit of a pundit, too, saying 'the music industry itself is full of rubbish whereas computer music is still in its infancy and it's fun. The 16-bit machines are merely a pointer to the future. I used 100K on the music and FX for the Atari ST version of *Barbarian*, and that's not a luxury – it's an essential.'

There's another kind of sound: speech from a computer has always fascinated programmers and users alike. The only problem is that it eats lots of memory. The most remarkable speech, without the aid of a synthesizer, is that of the *I, Ball* games. The voice of programmer Tim Cross punctuates the game with cries of 'I, Ball! I, Ball! Go for it!'.

Cross explains it casually: 'It's quite simple, really. There's a routine I've written and when I play speech through the tape deck into the ear socket the computer stores it as bits. It's usually the last thing I do to use up what's left of the memory.'



Richard Joseph, the man behind the thwacks of Palace Software's *Barbarian*

TRANTOR – THE LAST STORMTROOPER

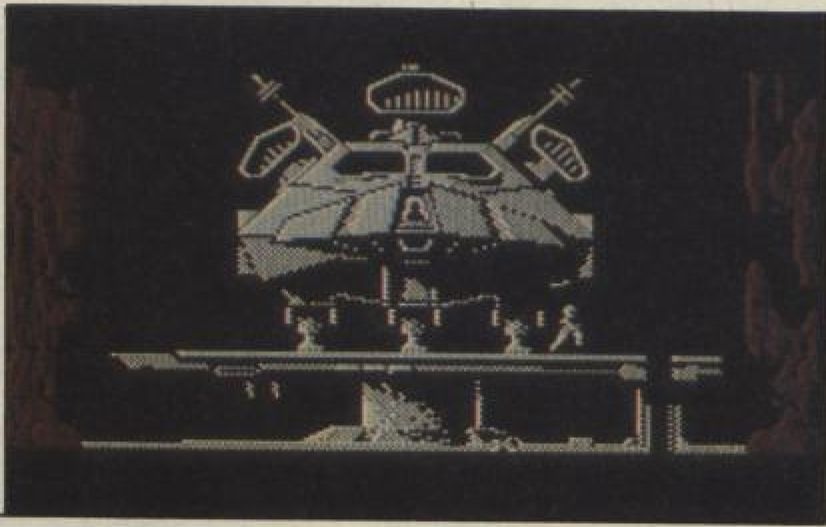
Producer: **GO!**
Retail price: **£8.99**
Authors: **Probe Software**

Trantor, the last stormtrooper, is abandoned on an alien planet. By activating the main planetary computer held in the terminal building, our hero can escape his imprisonment.

Trantor finds himself near the terminal building's lift, and to progress further he must run, duck and jump his way past a series of vertically pounding pneumatic hammers. All this time his bootsteps are dogged by myriad hovering droids and robots, which can be blasted from the air by the flame-thrower that Trantor carries.

To provide further aid, our hero can search any locker that he passes; when a helpful item is collected a suitable icon is displayed at the top of the screen.

There are eight terminals in the complex, each of which provides a letter. The letters must be made up into a computer-related word. This can then be keyed into the main computer terminal. (A time limit means that there is no time for dawdling in any sector, but discovering a letter resets the time



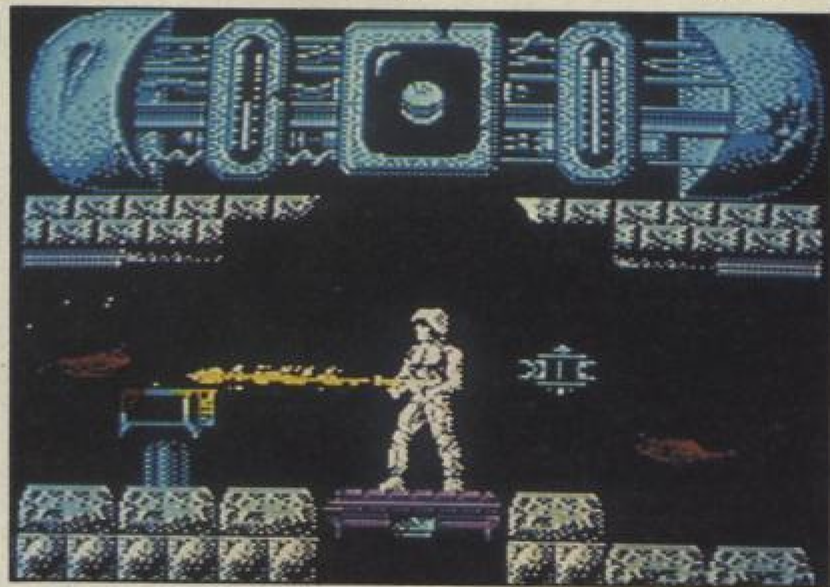
► **Trantor storms into a high-tech game of scrabble**



MIKE

" Trantor **has excellent presentation; the loading screen is a work of art, and the sequence just after the game has loaded, where the little man gets out of the space ship, runs along and trips up, is brilliant. I was quite impressed by the in-game presentation, too; the sound is very good, and the graphics are large and well-coloured, though there's an awful lot of clash. But it's annoying that Trantor refuses to jump and fire at the same time, because half the aliens come at you from head height! It's easy but unplayable, and thus unaddictive. I don't think anyone's going to splash out £8.99 for a nice intro demo. "**

52%



► **Come on baby, light my fire:** *Trantor – The Last Stormtrooper*

► **There's nothing more than meets the eye –** *Trantor* **stars graphics, and the gameplay takes a supporting role**



BYM

" Trantor has fantastic graphics but it takes some getting used to. Death comes almost instantly after you've started the game, because most of the nasties are out of your reach yet can easily take your energy. It soon becomes tedious starting the game over and over and over and over again and again and again. "

68%



clock.)

Once he's assembled the word Trantor is given a beam code which he can use in the beam area to complete his mission.

PAUL

" There's no doubting that the graphical appeal and presentation of Trantor **is very strong, but it might not have lasting appeal to match. The biggest problem is the lack of variation. Nearly all the time is spent running and shooting – both of which require little skill – and practically no time at all is required for any problem using grey matter.** Trantor **would have been much better if Probe Software had spent as much time on the concept of** Trantor **as they obviously did on the graphics and animation. "**

82%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: beautiful – large and colourful, though this results in a lot of clash
Sound: brilliant synthesised four-channel sound – even on the 48K version
Options: definable keys
General rating: excellent presentation and graphics conceal shallow gameplay

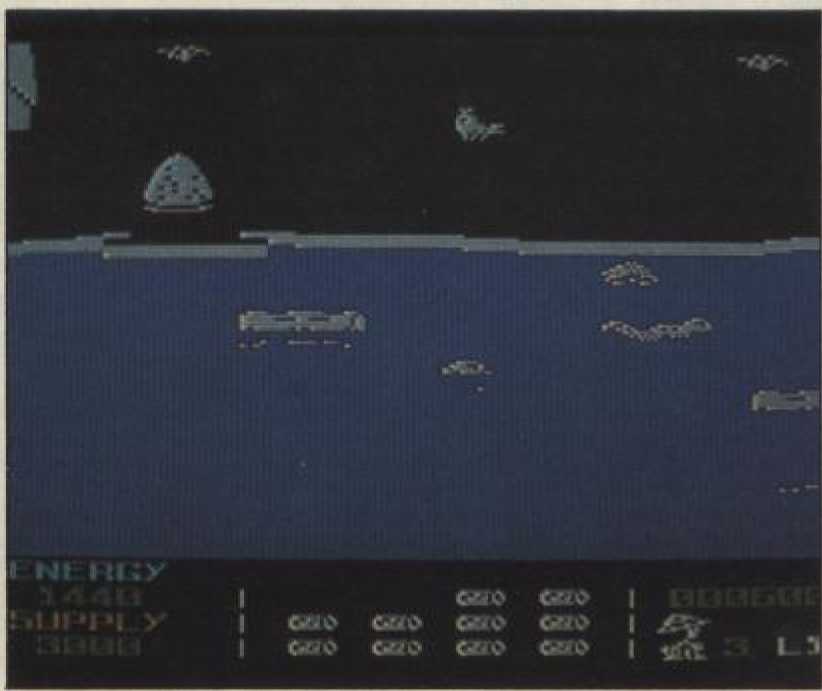
Presentation	80%
Graphics	85%
Playability	66%
Addictive qualities	61%
OVERALL	**68%**

PARK PATROL

Producer: **Firebird Silver**
Retail price: **£1.99**

Ranger Percy Nutting has lost a marble or two, and you're called in to sort out the mess his nervous breakdown has caused at Papatoetoe Park, an environmental paradise now full of litter, wilful wildlife and incompetent swimmers.

The park is shown on a horizontally-split screen, with its blue lake full of swimmers, snakes, litter and logs, and the red landscape that forms the northern bank inhabited by crusty-backed turtles.



Since the Park Keepers' Union isn't too strong, your equipment is limited to a small canoe. You can paddle this across the lake in any direction you choose, leaping out whenever anything needs to be collected from the bank.

Every time you gather a piece of litter, a tin can or a bottle, you are awarded points, and one litter icon is removed from the display at the bottom of the screen. When all the rubbish in one level has been collected, you can move on to the next.

But this isn't as easy, or as safe, as school litter patrol. Your three lives are seriously threatened by obstacles in the water and by the local fauna; the world's first family of homing snakes presents a particular danger. So you carry a supply of Boots' snake repellent: just one capsule flicked into the water clears the area.

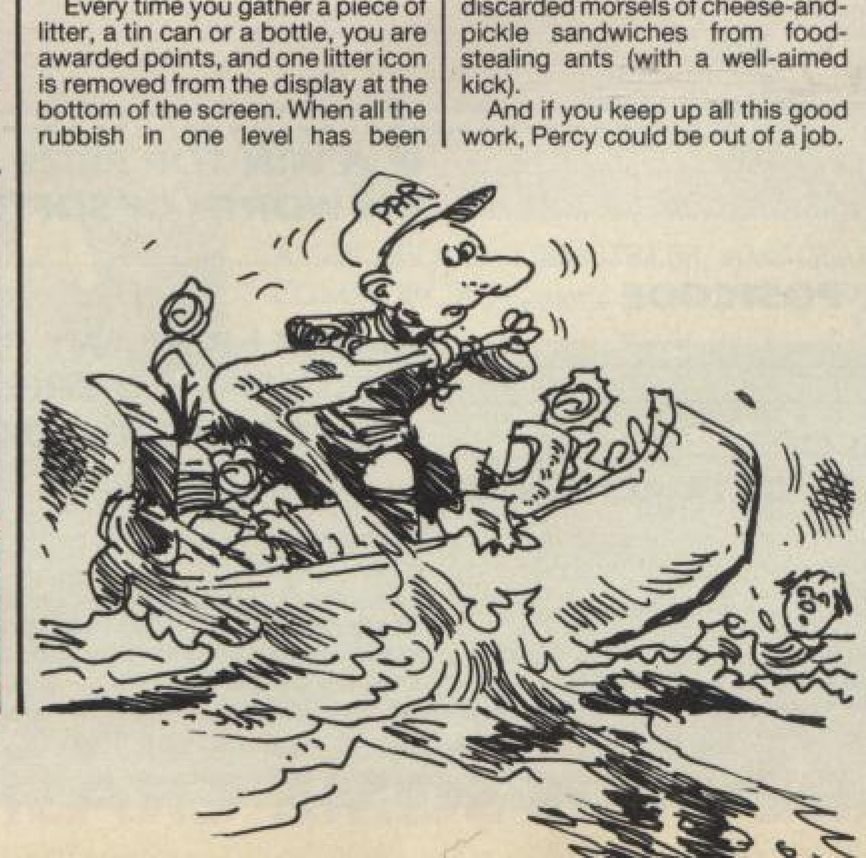
Swimmers also cut swaths through the wobbly wetness of the water, but some destroy your canoe if it hits them and others get in trouble and have to be rescued.

Because you missed breakfast,

► **Firebird scoops Branson's Virgin with the first litter-collecting sim . . .**

your energy supply is limited and falling. You can replenish your calorie count by rescuing discarded morsels of cheese-and-pickle sandwiches from food-stealing ants (with a well-aimed kick).

And if you keep up all this good work, Percy could be out of a job.



Opponents of sexism in software may be pleased to learn that in *Park Patrol* the player can be male or female – he just has to make up his mind, doesn't he?

CRITICISM

● " This is simply a *Frogger*-type game with sweet little overtones. The monochromatic graphics are nothing to shout about – badly-defined sprites on a cluttered background. The basic idea is to collect every piece of litter on one level in order to progress to the next ultraexciting level and start all over again! The best part is changing from a man to a woman, going around with skirts waving in the park breeze (a bit pervy, that . . .). Otherwise, there's not much reason to recommend *Park Patrol*, with its beepy sound FX and boring gameplay "

NICK **27%**

● **" The old Firebird trick of lengthening the loading time so that the game itself seems superzappy and wonderful certainly works for the first two lives of** Park Patrol**. And it's not too boring because you can go on from the first few pointless screens to more difficult ones with more nasties. The simulation of movement on water works well, and the speed of the swimmers is just right to let the boat change direction. The control of direction in midjump adds humour, but the idea of playing as either a boy ranger or a girlie ranger only has the value of being cute. "**

BYM **62%**

● *" I can't understand what all the fuss is about – I can't see anything in* Park Patrol *to explain the praise its Commodore version got. The concept is very simple – and it's very, very easy. Even with as many people and obstacles as possible on each level, it's a doddle to finish. The graphics are nothing to write home about, and the only enjoyable things in* Park Patrol *are the lovable characters – but even they lack variety. "*

PAUL **55%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: unnecessarily blocky with little use of colour
Sound: rambling tune at the beginning; spot FX
Options: definable gender
General rating: a dull collecting game with a humourous touch

Presentation	53%
Graphics	42%
Playability	56%
Addictive qualities	47%
OVERALL	**48%**

ROBIN CANDY RETURNS WITH SCORES

IT'S THE SECTION READERS KEEP ASKING FOR –

THE SUPERHIGH SCORES
THE PRETTY GOOD SCORES IN FACT,
JUST ABOUT ANYBODY'S SCORES!

SCORES is the high-score section with a difference. Lloyd Mangram's Hall Of Slime, the last CRASH high-score section, was widely regarded as a haven for liars who added a few noughts to the end of each score. That's why most of them ended up on the Ludlow gibbet.

But Robin Candy's **SCORES** is more than a hall of boasts because it's arranged game-by-game – that way you can go directly to your favourite games and see how the rest of the CRASH readers compare with your top score, so you know what to aim for.

And don't worry if you're not the most dextrous binary basher ever to play a computer game – **SCORES** will be compiled a bit differently from other high-score sections.

Each month Robin and the CRASH team will be looking out for the greatest scores on the LATEST games – so even if the game has only just come out your half-complete score may be further than anyone else has got so far. And don't forget to add the date to your entry, because we'll be following the progress of games through the months from the day they're released to the day someone completes them, and beyond!

And it's not just high-flyers who'll appear, either; besides the record score for each game, we'll publish the scores and names of a couple of other players, picked at random from all the entries, to show the full range of gamers. Everybody has a chance of appearing in **SCORES**! THERE IS NO MINIMUM SCORE.

Each month Robin will pick five winners from all the entries (regardless of their scores and of whether their scores were published); the first one out of the pile wins £40 worth of software of his or her choice, plus a CRASH cap and T-shirt; the next four win a CRASH cap and T-shirt each. So don't forget to tell us on the form what software and T-shirt you'd like if you win a prize!

Send this form with your scores for up to three games to: ***ROBIN CANDY'S SCORES, CRASH, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB***. No lying, please – improbably huge scores will be binned! If you want to prove you've really done it, you can always send a photo or a screen dump of the game showing your score . . .

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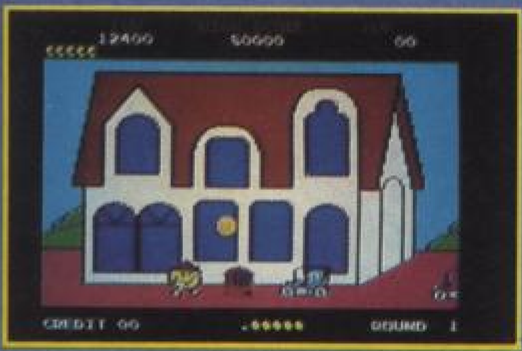
At the risk of becoming tedious, we're going to point out once again that the decision of CRASH's appointed judges is absolutely final in all respects, so at least if you bribe them you can be sure of getting your money's worth.

AND THERES A CHANCE TO WIN £40 WORTH OF SOFTWARE PLUS SOME CRASH CLOTHES

PAC-LAND

TM and © 1984
NAMCO Ltd

PAC'S BACK

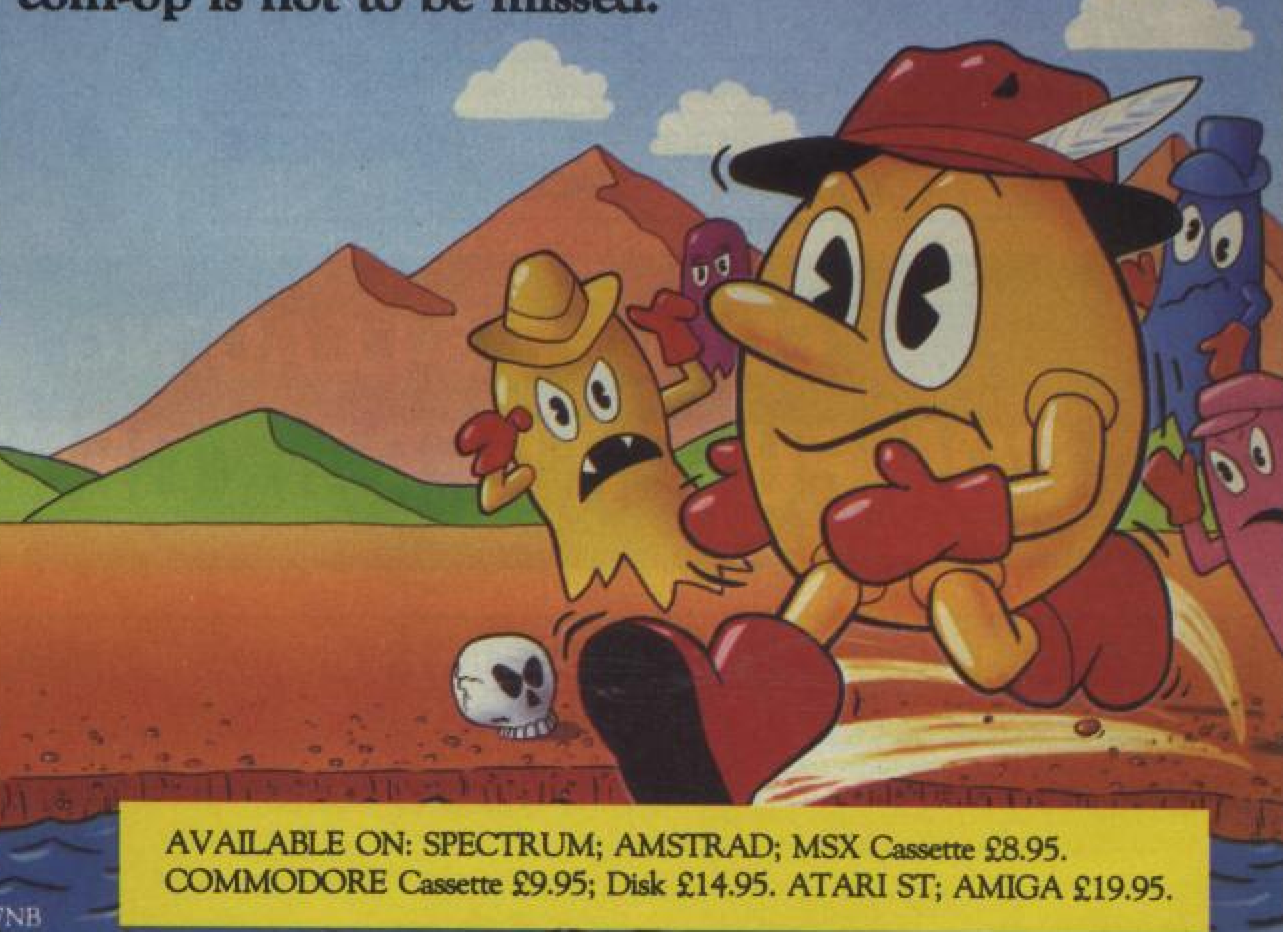


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RED L.E.D.

Producer: **Starlight**
Retail price: **£7.99**

You control three different droids, each with different capabilities; they can be activated in turn, and each sent to one of a series of hexagonal landscapes.

These barren vistas consist of ramps and valleys, chasms and level plains. Move your droids carefully, controlling their movement so they don't tumble to their death or wander into acid lakes: there is a task to be done. Contained within each landscape are energy pods which must all be collected before the droid can go on to the next panorama.

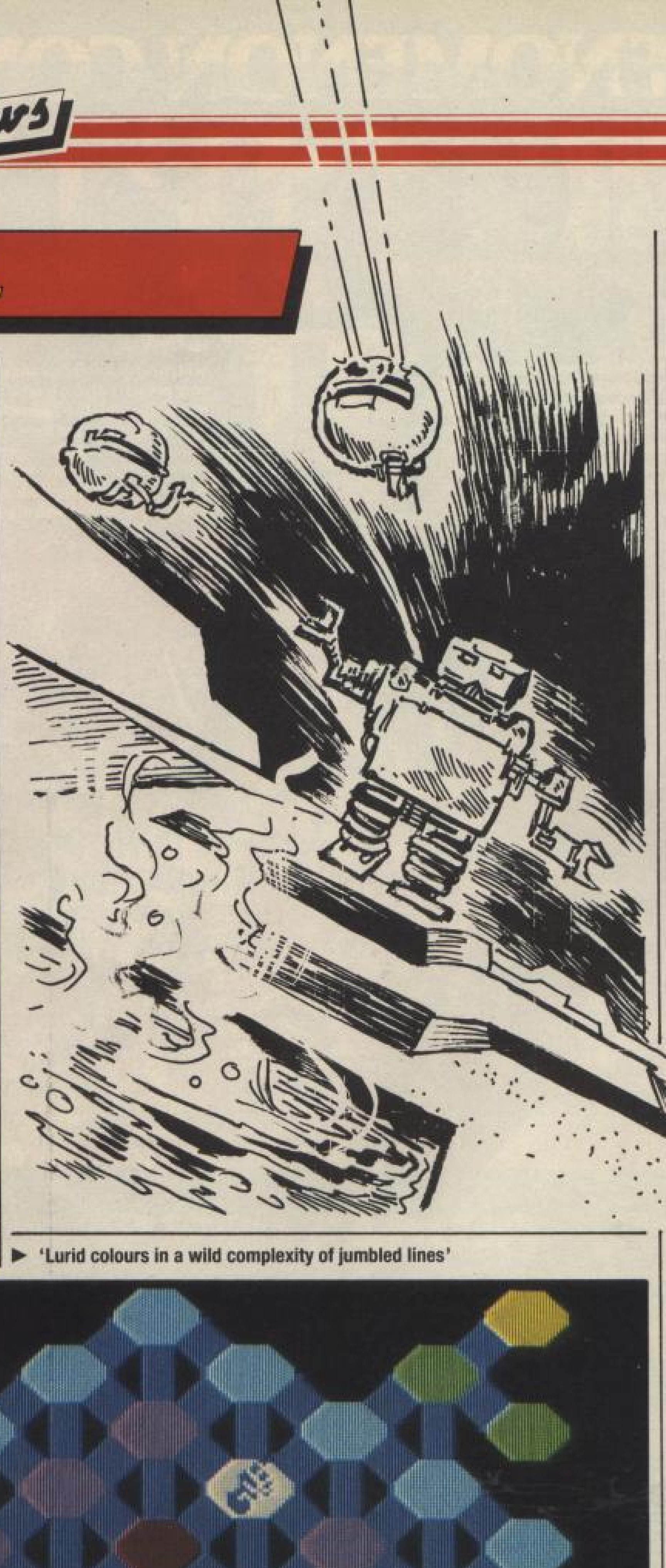
The letters B-O-N-U-S can also be collected to give a bonus play later.

The landscapes are inhabited by patrolling alien droids who can reduce your own droid's energy level, though it can be restored by picking up items. To help your droids in their quest are teleport

PAUL

" Despite the large play area and the many landscapes, Red L.E.D. **has surprisingly little game content. Most of your time is spent going through an endless (and colourless) void; only a tiny fraction of the map actually has anything affixed to it. And to make matters worse all the characters are very small and intricately detailed; thus they end up looking like smudges on the screen.** Red L.E.D. **offers very little. "**

51%





► 'Lurid colours in a wild complexity of jumbled lines'



MIKE

" Red L.E.D. **is a decent little game for** Marble Madness **fans the world over. The graphics are attractive; the scrolling is a lot smoother than in many games of this genre, but it still jerks more than it should for a play area of its size.** Red L.E.D. **is playable and quite addictive, but there's still a niggling feeling that it isn't going to last as long as a full-price product should. "**

68%



▶ *Red L.E.D.*: **a simple collecting challenge**



BYM

" Some games, such as Firebird's Park Patrol **(reviewed in this issue), benefit from slow-response graphics.** Red L.E.D. **does not! The intricate landscape layouts require a speedy yet controlled movement. Yet after two hours of mastering droid-control, the game becomes playable, if nearly impossible to complete. The lurid colours scrambling all over the screen in a wild complexity of jumbled lines don't make it any easier or more fun. Also, the reasoning behind your losing a small amount of energy for jumping out of the arena and losing a great deal for bumping into a jumbled mass of confused pixels the inlay calls an enemy droid escapes me completely; one happens as frequently as the other. Still, though I find games with many similar screens taxing on my patience, I'm sure many will love** Red L.E.D.. **"**

65%

pads, a droid-freeze device that temporarily immobilises alien droids, ice switches that glaciate an acid lake, and time capsules that either extend your time limit of an hour or reduce it.

Collectible smart bombs not only destroy all the alien mechanoids in the immediate area but can also take out enemy droid-generators. That's useful because when all the generators in a landscape have been destroyed, no more alien droids come a-nibbling at your robot's tin heels till the next landscape.

When a screen has been successfully completed a flashing hexagon is shown on the main landscape map. Link the far left landscape to the far right landscape with a series of such hexagons and victory is yours.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: mainly monochromatic, good scrolling
Sound: tune and FX, but nothing stunning
Options: definable keys
General rating: a limited but enjoyable *Marble Madnessesque* collecting game

Presentation	76%
Graphics	60%
Playability	67%
Addictive qualities	63%
OVERALL	**61%**

WHITE HEAT

Producer: **Code Masters**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Mark Bulldock**

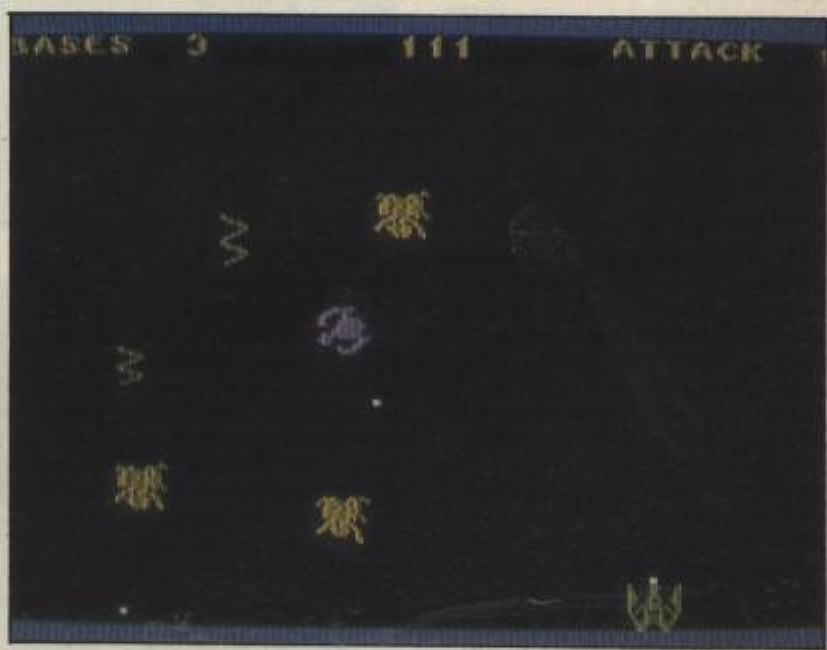
There's no escaping aliens – in *White Heat*, the three horizontally-movable bases under your control come under attack, each in turn, from 72 waves of aliens.

The attackers that make up each wave have different, idiosyncratic movements: some rotate in eccentric fashion, others zigzag sharply across the screen, others dive-bomb your installations. As they approach, they release blasts that you must try to avoid, because contact with the aliens or their fire destroys your base and you move on to the next of the trio. A warning is given when only one of your bases remains.

Each base is equipped with a blaster that can fire single shots at marauders, destroying them to produce point packages that are displayed at the location where the alien was annihilated. Accurate and speedy shooting is rewarded with higher points.

● **" My goodness, we do seem to be going back to our roots: after all the** Breakout **clones in the last few months and the** Marble Madness **madness before that, it feels like the software industry is starting all over again. What struck me first about** White Heat **was the strange alien-formation movements. The individual graphics are detailed and colourful, with smooth animation to match. But there's not much you can say about games of this genre, because they're basically the same – very unoriginal. "**
PAUL **32%**

● *" I thought* White Heat *was trying to be funny – but it isn't. It's desperately trying to be an addictive shoot-'em-up but fails pitifully. The action races along at the pace of a snail on crutches, and as you're only allowed one bullet onscreen at a time it's incredibly frustrating.* White Heat *is a good reason to pay more. "*
RICKY **15%**



▶ *White Heat*: **a shoot-'em-up where fire power is so restricted you can hardly even shoot 'em up**

If you are too hesitant in firing, the menacing creatures mutate into more deadly beasts with speedier actions. Near its moment of transformation, an alien takes on the complexion of a fresh boiled lobster: be warned.

CRITICISM

● " *White Heat* is the most simplistic, primitive and dull game I've had the misfortune to play in a long while. It may appeal to a few people, as it did to me, for a very short time just because all you have to do is blast things – but soon it's tedious. "
BEN **5%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston
Graphics: simple but quite colourful
Sound: grating tune and nauseating FX
Options: definable keys
General rating: a very poor shoot-'em-up

Presentation	43%
Graphics	22%
Playability	26%
Addictive qualities	26%
OVERALL	**17%**

JACK THE NIPPER II IN COCONUT CAPERS

Producer: **Gremlin Graphics**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Gremlin in-house**

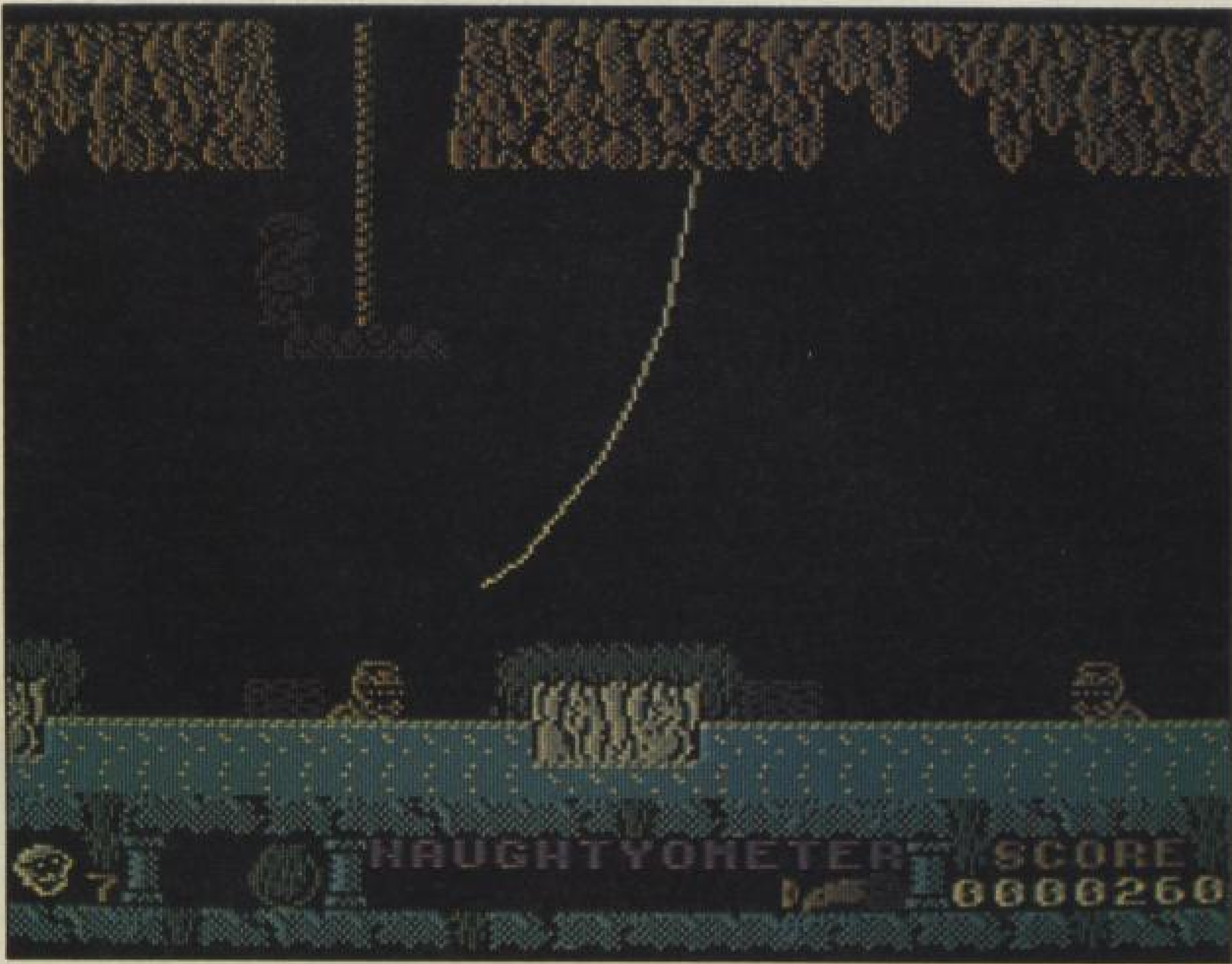
Regretting that he'd never travelled British Airways, Jack The Nipper has leaped from a plane in midflight, followed by his harrassed father. Their James Bond-like tumble deposits them in Jungleland – not much fun for an infant, you might think, but remember this babe's so tough he can change his own nappy without flinching.

Separated from dad, Jack sets off on a toddle, causing mayhem as he progresses through trees, cavernous halls, and underground passageways. Ladders, platforms, ropes and slides are all there to help Jack move, taking him to higher and lower levels and far-flung pockets of this arboreal empire. But he must be cautious when using them, as a tumble from the upper reaches is more than jungle Jack can take.

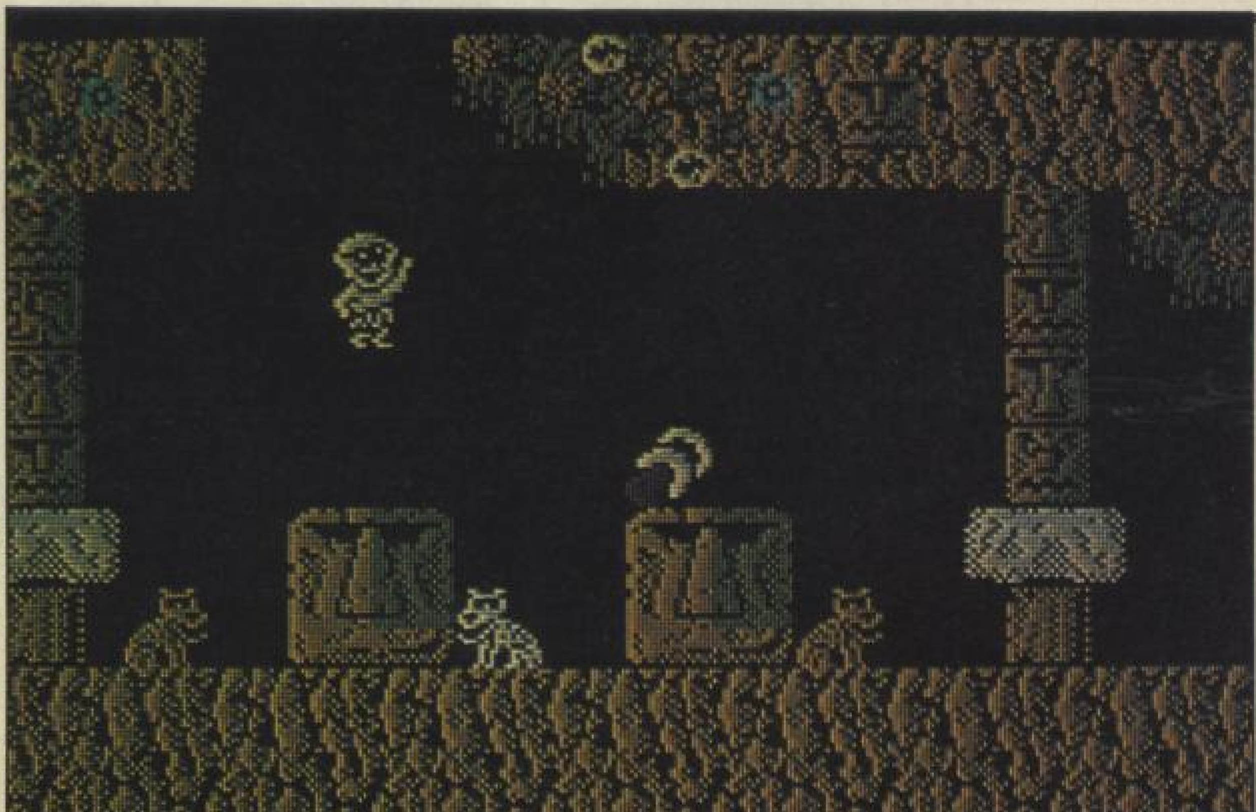
As Jack makes his way, he discovers that not everything is predisposed to his chubby-cheeked presence. Bats, birds, white elephants wearing shades, hippos in Raybans and sour-tempered scorpions are all out to give our wee man the touch of death.

The warriors of a native tribe are also irritated by his appearance and seek to find their spears some work. Fortunately – though the 'fortunately' may depend on whether you like small children – Jack can add to his eight lives by collecting dummies.

To further help his cause Jack discovers that he can gather other useful items to make life a little



▼ **A rare snap of Cameron's colonial babyhood**



▲ **Even the Darlings of Code Masters are crinkly compared to Jack The Nipper – and he keeps on nipping in Gremlin's hilarious *Coconut Capers***

PAUL

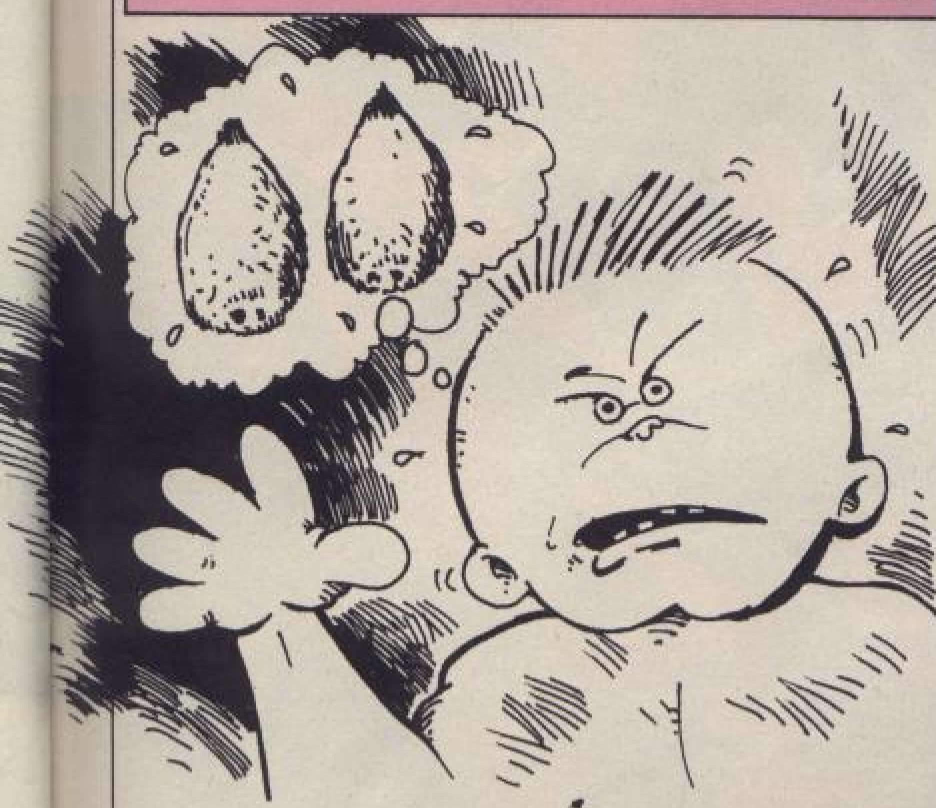
" Coconut Capers is a superb follow-up to Jack The Nipper, and I have only one gripe: Jack just isn't as naughty and reckless as in the earlier game. The problems and solutions aren't quite as apparent in Coconut Capers, and we don't have to be as mean to the locals as we're used to; perhaps Jack has cooled down a bit after being deported from Australia. At first it's hard to relate to the jungle surroundings, but persistent adventuring soon reveals a collection of natives who create a strong atmosphere. And Jack is as cute as ever. "

88%

RICKY

" *Coconut Capers* **is better graphically than its predecessor, with much more colour and decorative surroundings making it more appealing. And luckily this initial appeal doesn't wear off, because there's just so much to explore and discover. Though the puzzles aren't quite as obvious as in the first Jack game, you just have to delve deeper to uncover the hidden surprises of** *Coconut Capers*. **It's great played either as a simple platform game or as an involved puzzle game. And whichever way you want to look at it I can guarantee there'll be something enjoyable in it for you.** "

87%



easier and earn points. Dynamite, grease, honey, onion and woodworm are all at hand to aid this apple of his mother's eye. Explosive green coconuts are particularly helpful – they can take out an approaching danger if carefully lobbed in its direction – and an invincibility sack gives our young hooligan temporary immunity.

On collection, all objects are automatically divided (by icon boxes) into those that are weapons and those that are naughty, which when used correctly can elevate Jack's Naughtyometer to proportions that would make even the surgical stockings of an SAS-trained nanny twang.

But should Jack's father finally catch up with his errant offspring, a spanking puts paid to his capers and it all ends in tears.

Gremlin Graphics's *Jack The Nipper*, the terrible tot's first appearance, earned 93% overall in CRASH Issue 30 – and he was on the cover.

NICK

" **Jack The Nipper is back in full force! This game is as bursting with addictiveness as the original, and it has more added attractions. But some of Jack's new adventures have been copied from other games. For example, you can travel in a coal truck and that's out of** *Roller Coaster*; **in the river scene you can cross on logs** (*Dynamite Dan*); **the basic layout is very similar to** *Jet Set Willy*. **Still, this doesn't spoil the enjoyment you can get out of** *Coconut Capers*. **There are some really good spot FX and a good tune at the start of the 128K version. Colour is used well and the graphics are excellent, though the animation is a bit jerky.** *Coconut Capers* **is a fantastic follow-up with plenty of playability, so snap it up while you can** "

85%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: colourful and detailed with great animation
Sound: fairly good title tune and spot FX
General rating: a superb continuation of Jack The Nipper's exploits

Presentation	82%
Graphics	88%
Playability	89%
Addictive qualities	86%
OVERALL	**87%**

CALL ME PSYCHO

Producer: **Pirate**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Authors: **M Hartley and P Scririn**

Holding the world to ransom for £100 million, 20 BMX bikes and a bucket of shiny pebbles is all in a day's devilry for that atrocious academic, Professor Hans de Jaberwocky.

But his threat to gungify all those not wearing protective clothing is sufficient to spur Psycho, the humanoid droid, into altruistic action.

If this minor mechanoid is to save the likes of you and me from conversion into so many bowls of Bird's Dream Topping, Psycho must combat the robotic opposition created by the degenerate don.

This clique of dangerous devices includes Edgar, unarmed but with feet and hands that have been graded as lethal weapons by the Bognor police department; Grez Bret, a gun-toting 'bot; Bazooka Fred; and loony Chris.

Psycho must not only do his best against these unpleasant constructions of circuitry, but must also avoid the missiles, preprogrammed tanks, time bombs and mines that litter the place. To touch any of these induces in the droid a nasty attack of death, and he has but three lives.

Our daring rescuer can get some help by picking up the assorted weaponry – a pistol, bazooka, M-16 rifle and flame-thrower – that he finds. Each weapon has a limited supply of ammunition, but Psycho can increase this by touching extra arms caches.

Points are awarded for every opponent that Psycho consigns to the scrap heap, and the running total is increased by collecting junk food, milk shakes and emptied lager cans. Releasing prisoners swells the total even more.

Given a little personal living space, Psycho can begin to dismantle the series of doomsday devices that threaten our molecular stability. He does this by shorting each mechanism's power supply.

Once this is done, the heroic droid can make for a friendly submarine to discover the location of the next device. But should Psycho try and beetle prematurely to the sub before he has deactivated a device, he is penalised for his precociousness and is returned to his starting point.

CRITICISM

● " Perhaps this game should have been called *Call Me Cobra*, because it sure seems the same as Ocean's game – well, graphically anyway – even down to the hamburgers and megaweapons. And this conceptually boring game adds nothing new to a well-worn mindless genre. The gameplay suffers mostly from unresponsive controls and slow animation, both of which reduce its addictive qualities. Surprisingly, with games of this type a fair amount of thought is required when jumping around the platforms, and a map would be very useful. "

PAUL **41%**

● " **This is a real waste of time. The program is full of bugs and the gameplay is pathetic. The sprites have been badly defined and after a while it gets hard on the eyes.** *Call Me Psycho* **looks like a homemade job, and a very bad one at that. There are now so many games of this genre that when another one like this comes along it is simply a waste of time and money.** "

NICK **25%**

● " *Call Me Psycho makes a refreshing change from the rest of the shoot-'em-ups we've had this month. It isn't the wildest thing I've seen recently, but playable, reasonably addictive games at this price are not readily available.* "

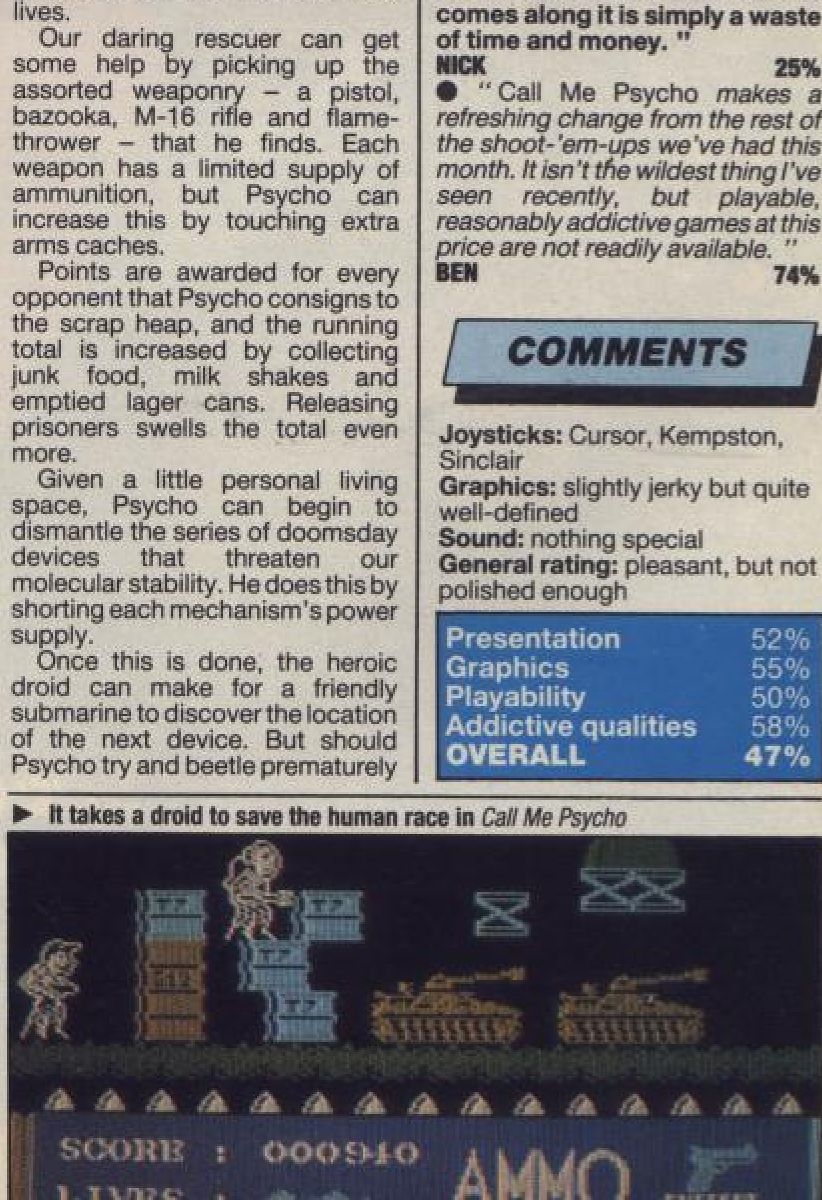
BEN **74%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: slightly jerky but quite well-defined
Sound: nothing special
General rating: pleasant, but not polished enough

Presentation	52%
Graphics	55%
Playability	50%
Addictive qualities	58%
OVERALL	**47%**

► **It takes a droid to save the human race in** *Call Me Psycho*




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REAL ARCADE ACTION AT ITS BEST!

The year is 2379: Earth's vast resources are finally running out (again!). You must bridge the path to the much needed matter supplies, using three ZMX all-purpose battle-droids to link up the vital cosmic-interlace grid.

SPECIAL FEATURES:

- Full 3D smooth scrolling action
- 37 different landscapes
- Bonus levels, teleport pads and enemy generators
- Graphics by Pete James
- Sound FX by Tony Crowther.

STARLIGHT SOFTWARE

C64/128 cass £9.99 C64/128 disk £12.99 AMSTRAD cass £9.99 AMSTRAD disk £14.99 SPECTRUM £8.99

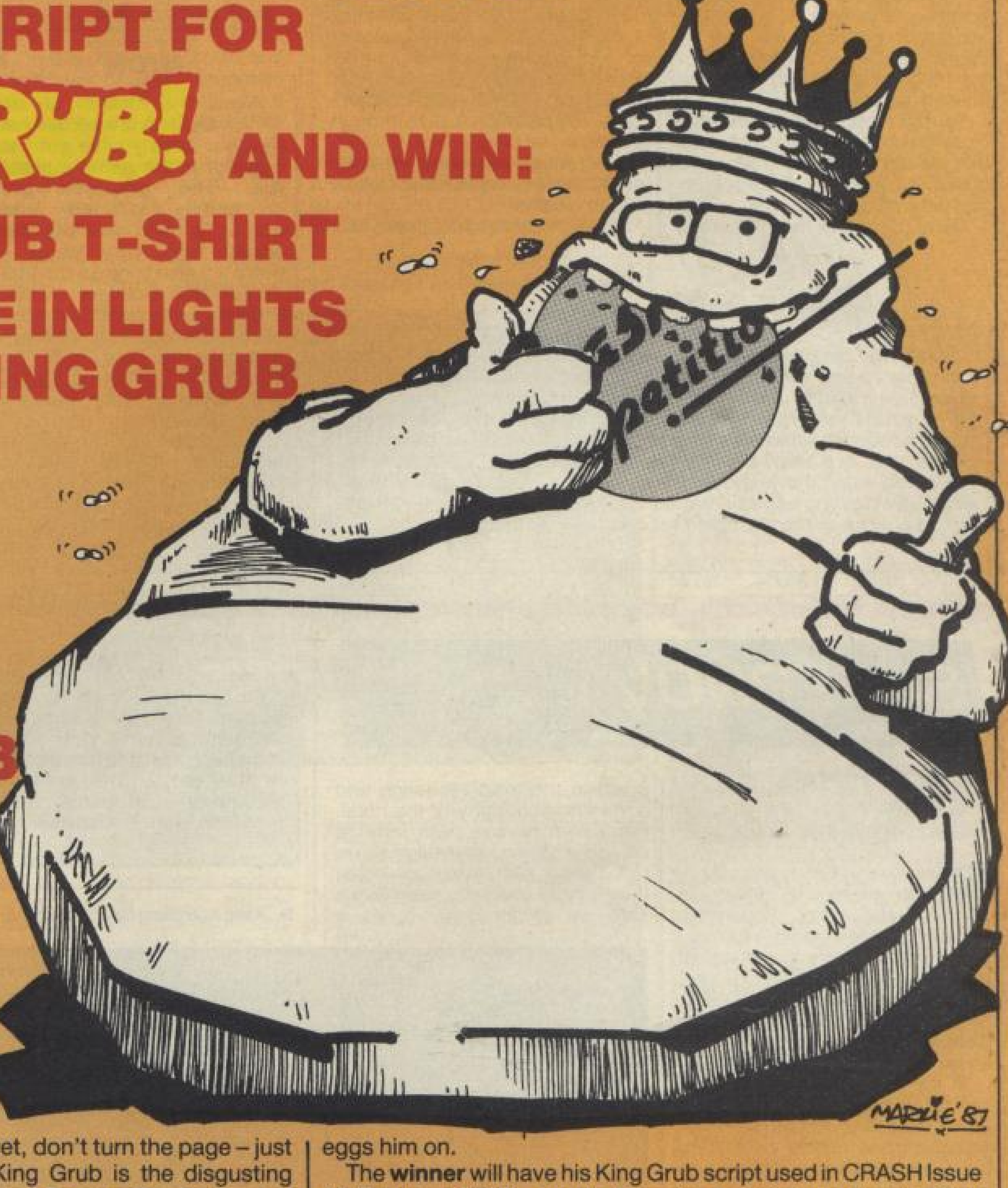
A TRULY DISGUSTING COMPETITION!

WRITE A SCRIPT FOR KING GRUB! AND WIN:

A KING GRUB T-SHIRT

YOUR NAME IN LIGHTS (WELL, IN KING GRUB ANYWAY)

THE ORIGINAL ARTWORK OF YOUR GRUB STRIP, AUTO-GRAPHED AND FRAMED!



IF you haven't heard of King Grub yet, don't turn the page – just thank your lucky stars, because King Grub is the disgusting CRASH cartoon character who makes Fungus The Bogeyman look appetising. (He's on page 100 this month.)

But if you've got a really strong stomach, you can join in the Grubbery and write a script (or at least an idea) for King Grub.

All you have to do is write down what you think King Grub should do and say in his February strip – remembering that the strip is about four frames long, so the King can say up to four distinct lines, and that there are no other regular characters (apart from the flies).

If you can't work out all the words, just send in a rough idea of what King Grub might do and say, and you could still win the prize.

The entries will be judged by Markie Kendrick, who draws King Grub, and Gordon Druce, who has a revolting imagination and eggs him on.

The **winner** will have his King Grub script used in CRASH Issue 49 (February 1988) – and he'll receive the original artwork of that strip, autographed by the artist and framed by, well, a picture-framer. He'll also receive a King Grub T-shirt to nauseate his family and friends.

Five **runners-up** will get T-shirts too.

Send your King Grub scripts on an old sock . . . sorry, a postcard or the back of a sealed envelope, remembering to give your name, address, and T-shirt size (M or XXL), to: **THE TRULY DISGUSTING KING GRUB COMP, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*** As usual, the decision of CRASH's appointed judges is final and no arguments concerning the outcome will be entered, and if you do try to argue, well, just remember King Grub is not something to be sat on by on a dark night.

ATV SIMULATOR



▶ *ATV Simulator*: taking the mickey out of racing games?

Producer: **Code Masters**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Tim Miller**

Put on that crash hat, squeeze into those squeaky leathers and buckle on your boots – it's time to scramble aboard your chubby-wheeled All Terrain Vehicle (ATV) and head for the roughest, toughest, meanest scenery you can find.

You can take runs against the clock on obstacle-littered courses that spread themselves over sand dunes, grassy land, snowscapes and dirt tracks.

Many obstacles require careful negotiation – if your ATV gets stuck you lose valuable time attempting to free its wheels. Speed is crucial, not only in your race against the clock but also in determining your success at negotiating hazards. Fastest is not always best. Tackling even the most innocuous obstacle, such as a small rock, at the wrong velocity or in the wrong manner can rip your grip and buttocks from handlebar and seat and propel you in an elegant swallow dive through the air.

And there are some strange obstacles which you have to drive into to believe . . .

The ATV can do wheelies, which

BEN

" Surely the programmer intended this as a mickey-take of all the other racing games? Perhaps not, but I haven't had such a good time trying to complete six laps of lunacy in ages. There are some novel uses of hard surfaces which make life hell – ever tried to get a four-wheeled bike off a beach ball that's being bounced on the nose of a seal? My only real niggle is that ATV Simulator **is much too easy; there should be a lot more levels to give it that extra bit of lasting appeal. I wouldn't pay two quid for a game that would only keep me occupied for a couple of hours. "**

59%

NICK

" Wow! It's Kikstart **on an ATV. Control is a bit hard at first but once you've got the hang of it the game's great fun. The graphics are adequately defined and colour is used well but the sound isn't very good – there's a nice tune on the title screen and between levels, but only gritty spot FX for the motor sound. There's also a gameplay problem with the time limit: climbing back onto your vehicle is *very* time-consuming.** ATV Simulator **is a thoroughly addictive game and a favourite of mine because I'm the only reviewer that can get to the water level. HA! "**

88%

PAUL

" Well, it's about time someone had a go at Kikstart **on the Spectrum – and though this isn't as playable as the Commodore classic it certainly has all the humour. Where** ATV Simulator **fails is in the number of 'impossible' situations and the frequency with which they appear – many times I lost control of my bike, or the ATV just reappeared on the screen out of my reach. The animation of the driver and his vehicle is brilliant and realistic, especially when you're trying to pull the bike out of a hole. There's no doubt that lots of time has been spent making** ATV Simulator **aurally and visually appealing, but you've got to have more to a game than slick presentation. "**

50%

SUPERNOVA

Producer: **Players**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Author: **Anthony Bailey**

For every holidaying robot who wants to toast its circuits, the Supernova Hotel on planet Antares is the only place to be. There's a snag, of course . . . money. Such a stay doesn't come cheap, but ROBOT, an impecunious automaton, decides to take advantage of the lavish facilities anyway.

At the end of his stay, ROBOT can't pay his bill, but till he does he can't leave Antares. With homesickness welling inside him, the freeloader knows he has to accumulate cash.

ROBOT begins the monetary quest in the main reception and administration areas of the hotel. From here he can pass through unlocked doors, and use lifts to reach other sections of the hotel; they include a security room with a safe, an arcade-game room, a

NICK

" The graphics really are good, with the little ball-like character moving well, though the scrolling is a mite jerky. The different levels and objects spice the game up and boost addictiveness; I especially liked the arcade level. Supernova **is a brilliant game, let down just a touch by its speed and sound. "**

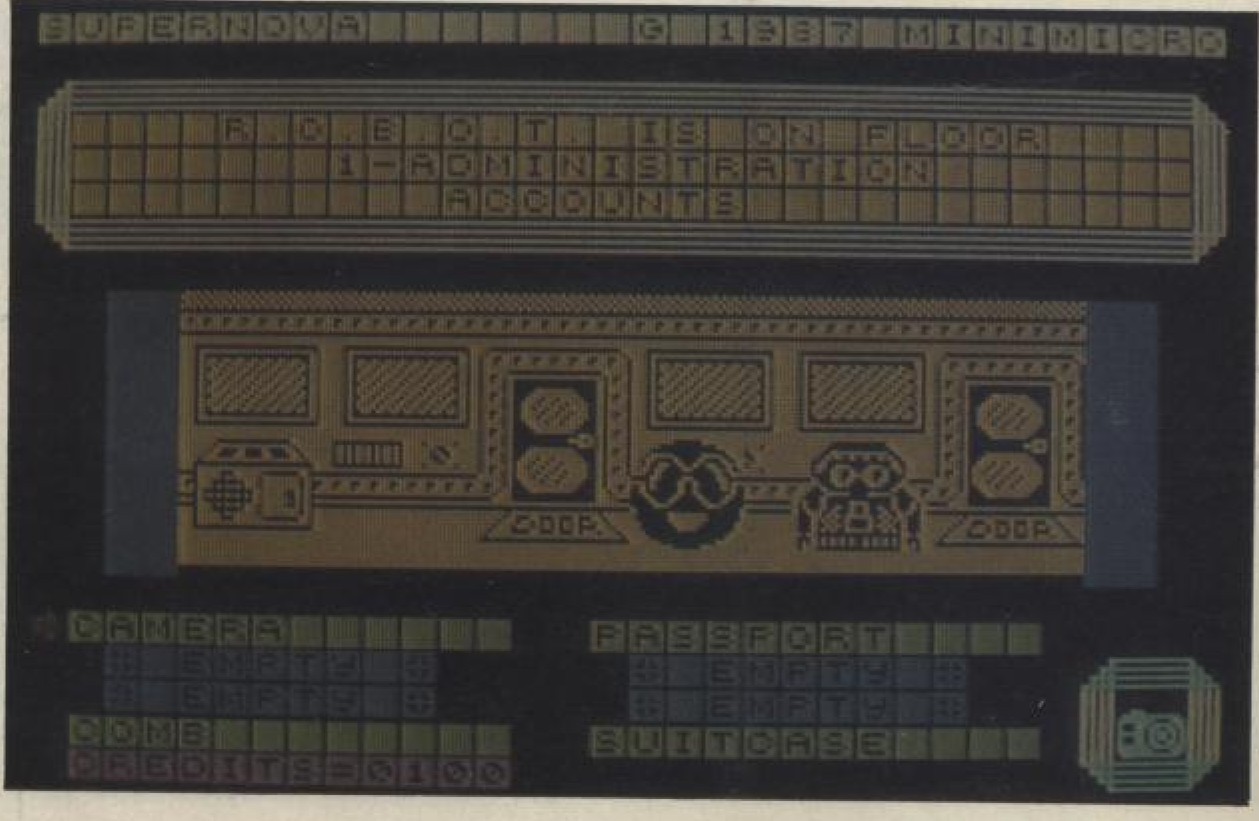
74%

BEN

" I'm very surprised Supernova **wasn't snatched up by some budget label ages ago; it looked excellent as homegrown software about a year ago. It's nice, too, to see that it's still appealing and compelling, which isn't so usual for budget games of this genre. The presentation's great; a good tune plays throughout the game, nice screen layout and some pretty graphics help. Recommended . . . "**

74%

▶ **Keep searching for those elusive funds or you'll have to wash the dishes . . .**



help it climb steep surfaces, and jump, which provides you with extra lift as you tackle a ramp.

But sometimes not even such skilful manoeuvres can save you from a tumble. If this is your fate, recover quickly, run back to your vehicle and remount it with all the daredevil panache you can muster after a bone-jarring fall.

If you manage to complete a course within the time allowed, and with sufficient fuel remaining, you move on to the next viscera-vibrating track.

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: well-defined and reasonably colourful, but a bit jerky on the scrolling
Sound: good David Whittaker tune with neat FX
Options: definable keys
General rating: an amusingly entertaining and playable biking game of dubious lastability

Presentation	78%
Graphics	69%
Playability	65%
Addictive qualities	59%
OVERALL	**66%**

sports hall, a chemist's and stationer's and, importantly, the guests' bedrooms. ROBOT can enter locked rooms only after finding the appropriate key.

In some of these rooms are lockers that contain items useful in the quest for increased funding. ROBOT can access lockers, examine their contents, take and carry up to eight items at once. These objects can include door keys, food, flour and glasses.

Supernova first featured in CRASH Issues 29 and 30, as homegrown software.

MIKE

"I enjoyed Supernova **when it first came out, but now the poor music and graphics on a small playing area disappoint me. "**

47%

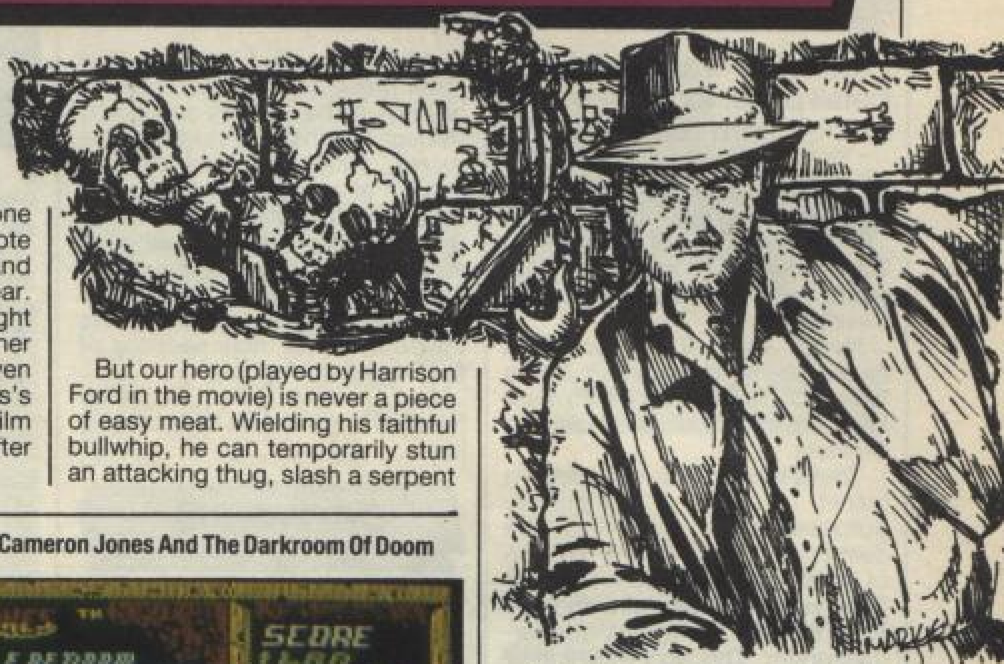
COMMENTS

Joystick: Kempston
Graphics: mainly monochromatic but pleasantly attractive
Sound: good tune
General rating: a refined, if slightly dated, puzzle game

Presentation	65%
Graphics	60%
Playability	66%
Addictive qualities	64%
OVERALL	**65%**

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

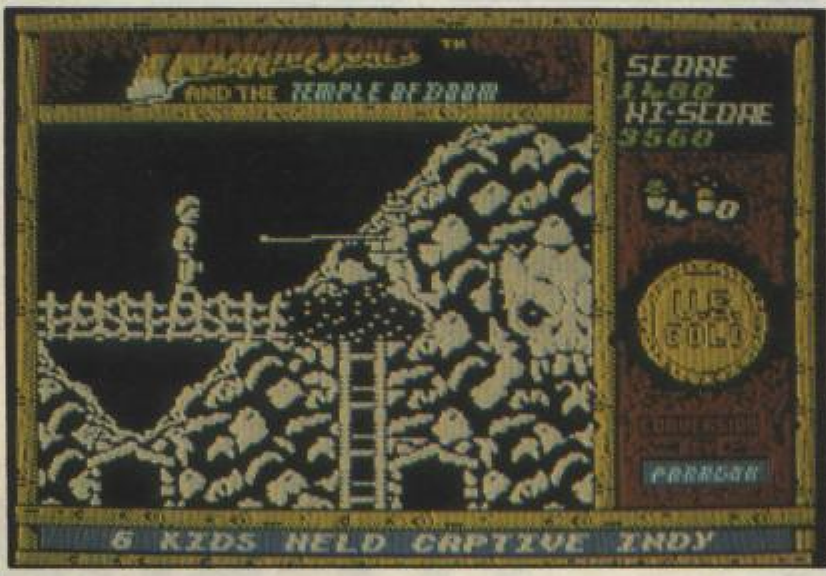
Producer: **US Gold**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Paragon**



The sacred Sankara Stone that protects a remote Indian village is stolen and all the village children disappear. That's no bad thing, you might think – but Indiana Jones has other ideas in this licence of Steven Spielberg and George Lucas's massively successful 1984 film and the Atari coin-op, hereinafter referred to as *IJATTOD*.

But our hero (played by Harrison Ford in the movie) is never a piece of easy meat. Wielding his faithful bullwhip, he can temporarily stun an attacking thug, slash a serpent

▶ **It's that whip in full, courtesy of Cameron Jones And The Darkroom Of Doom**



Nine hapless babes have been imprisoned and forced to dig for precious stones beneath the evil Pankot Palace by the thuggee death cult. In the caverns, ladders connect levels and narrow walkways lead to distant sections. Here Indy encounters a myriad of dangers which can take out one of his five lives – a kiss from a snake kills, thuggee cultists and their masters can beat Indy into oblivion or destroy him with a well-aimed shot.

MIKE

" IJATTOD is essentially dull, like the arcade original. I can understand some people enjoying its simplicity, but that's half the reason I don't like it. The graphics are poor, with the score line difficult to read and the playing area unattractive. The odds are stacked against the player, even more than in a normal game – the thug guards have roughly the same amount of kill power as you, but there are millions more of them, which makes it just a teensy bit tougher! "

52%

BEN

" The people responsible for the game plan have got one thing essentially wrong: Indiana Jones is hard, y'know, mean 'n' butch 'n' muscular (he is, after all, played by Harrison Ford), so it's pretty unlikely that anyone he hits with his megadeath-dealing whip is going to get up again, isn't it? It's incredibly frustrating having to nudge a thug guard off a cliff to kill him – whatever happened to violence in computer games? IJATTOD is good fun for a while, but I wouldn't recommend it strongly. "

67%

and crack away the locks on the children's cell doors.

When all nine little darlings have been rescued, Indy can reach a tunnel that takes him deep into the earth. Again he must defeat the thuggee guards, as well as a giant and flitting bats. Missing rails and jumps can cause a derailment as Jones rides downward in a mine car that isn't even up to British Rail standards.

If Indiana survives this hair-raising excursion he finds himself in the Temple Of Doom, where the Sankara Stone is placed resplendent with deadliness before Kali, the four-armed goddess of death. Jones must take the stone and escape with it, deeper into the mine's dark caverns where he has to recover another three stones and escape across an insubstantial rope bridge – just as in the film.

RICKY

" The great colour and graphics of the arcade game cover up the actual gameplay, but with the Spectrum conversion the gameplay is the first thing you notice. And it's not impressive – the first level can become frustrating if you're not quick enough with the whip. IJATTOD is OK, not the sort of thing to rush out and buy but certainly worth trying your hand at. "

76%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: large, mainly monochromatic and slightly jerky
Sound: no tune, reasonable FX
General rating: a coin-op conversion with little gameplay and some frustrating difficulties

Presentation	68%
Graphics	62%
Playability	62%
Addictive qualities	66%
OVERALL	**65%**

HOLIDAY IN SUMARIA

Producer: **Pirate Software**
Retail price: **£2.99**
Author: **Sam Garforth**

With package holidays in vogue this month (see the review of Players's *Supernova* . . .), here's another game with a moral for joyous travellers.

Never, ever, EVER go on a package holiday with Costa Galactic Travel – they'll go bust and leave you on a place like Sumaria.

That's where Sid is stranded – a planet under compulsory purchase and soon to be destroyed. Sidney's only chance of leaving this doomed world is to find the Grail Of Gackara and use it to fire up an ageing matter-transporter. This accumulation of geriatric electronics is hidden in one of Sumaria's castles, but the historic piles are populated by poisonous bats and minotaurs. If our troubled tourist lets them get too close, they nick one of his lives.

Sid's sole chance of Grail-grabbing is by making like a *Blue Peter* presenter and using objects he finds as he shuffles and jumps through the obstacle-ridden castle rooms. Only one item can be carried at a time, but this could give vital information about nearby monsters, or provide protection. A sword kills attackers, the cloak frightens them away, dropping a clock freezes time, and teleporters transport Sid to other sections of the Sumarian kingdom.

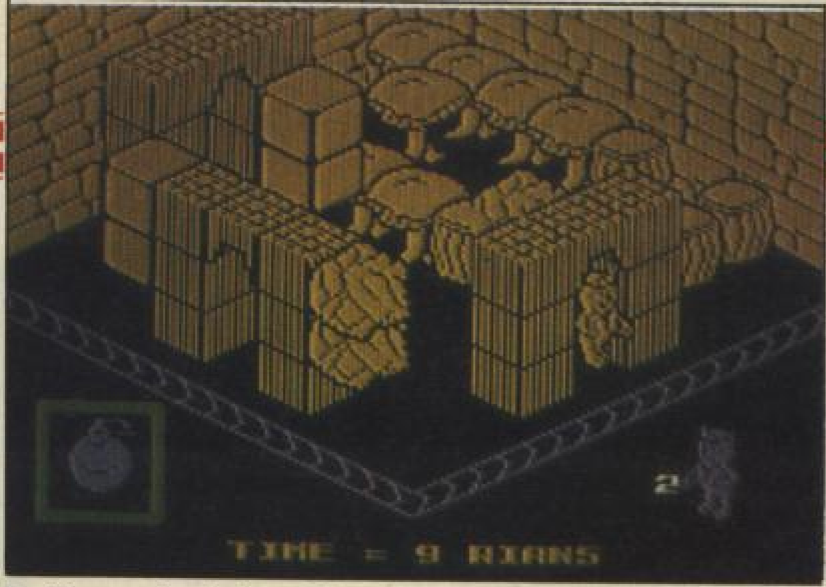
And there's only Sumarian minutes to go before the planet is lost.

CRITICISM

●" Well, I knew that this would happen – that as soon as CRL released *3D Gamemaker* (reviewed in CRASH Issue 43) there'd be a rush of rubbish little 3-D games. Here the graphics are thoroughly trashy, bugs appear all the time, gameplay is at its minimum, and the sound – well, the sound could be made by a orang-utan on a ZX81! And the character set has been defined into really *CHUNKY* letters to polish it all off. "
NICK **17%**

●" *This is a REALLY boring game. The graphics are basic forced perspective and the way the character slows down when he passes behind a piece of scenery is unbearable. The tune is awful, and everything that CRL's* 3D Gamemaker *doesn't do for you has been done minimally. Even in the budget price range, you can do a lot better than buy this.* "
MIKE **26%**

●" **What can you say about this type of game that hasn't already been written? I've seen a few slow and flickery games in my time, but** Holiday In Sumaria **takes the biscuit. Everything is appalling: sound, graphics, playability, absolutely everything. It is utter dross.** "
PAUL **4%**



► Of course, there's always Majorca instead . . .

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: poor forced perspective
Sound: excruciating to the eardrums
Options: definable keys
General rating: a dreadful 3-D arcade adventure

Presentation	29%
Graphics	23%
Playability	16%
Addictive qualities	15%
OVERALL	**16%**

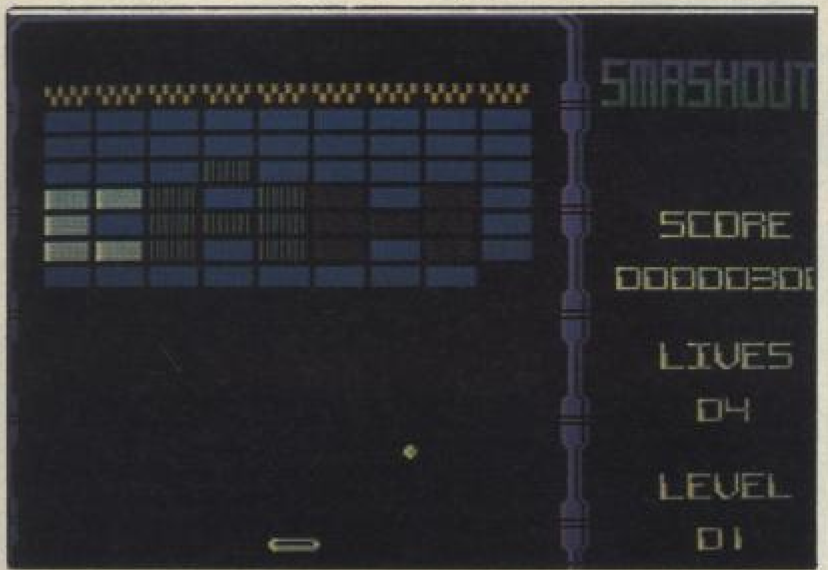
SMASH OUT!

Producer: **Pirate Software**
Retail price: **£2.99**
Author: **Eugene Morris**

Budget *Breakout* addict Commander Zeplan finds himself and his ship trapped in the volcano-like world at a planet's core. Zeplan's only chance of escape is to deploy the globules of boiling plasma toward the strata of the planet's crust above.

The separate rectangular blocks that make up each stratum are destroyed on contact with the plasma, and for each block destroyed points are awarded. side of the ship as a bat, moving it horizontally, and deflect the

▶ **You are trapped in a strange underworld, hemmed in by *Breakout* clones**



If the ship is moved too lethargically or inaccurately, the plasma is not deflected, and one of the ship's five lives is lost.

Different blocks have different characteristics. Some, when hit by the plasma, change its size and speed; others alter the condition of the ship. If Zeplan does not fall foul of their idiosyncrasies, he may yet progress ever upward through the different levels and once more see the light of day.

CRITICISM

●" This certainly isn't an original game concept, and there isn't much difference between this version and the first hand-held game you could buy. It'd be difficult to recreate this ancient game as something exciting and new, but I can imagine someone developing basic hand-and-eye coordination being attracted to *Smash Out!*'s smooth, colourful graphics. "
BYM **17%**

●" **What is this? Okay, so** Breakout **clones may be back in style, but one of this quality? The control is sluggish, the graphics are simplistic and dull, and though I thought a lot of** Batty **I rate** Smash Out! **as about ten times worse than** Arkanoid. **Boring and badly-implemented, it doesn't even try to be anything different. "**
MIKE **10%**

●" *If Pirate Software keeps on producing dross like this, I can't see the new label staying in business for long.* Smash Out! *is just about up to the standards of a bad type-in listing – but only because of the addition of a screen editor.* Thru The Wall *(free with a rubber-keyed Spectrum) looks like a masterpiece in technical achievement compared to this tommyrot. "*
PAUL **5%**

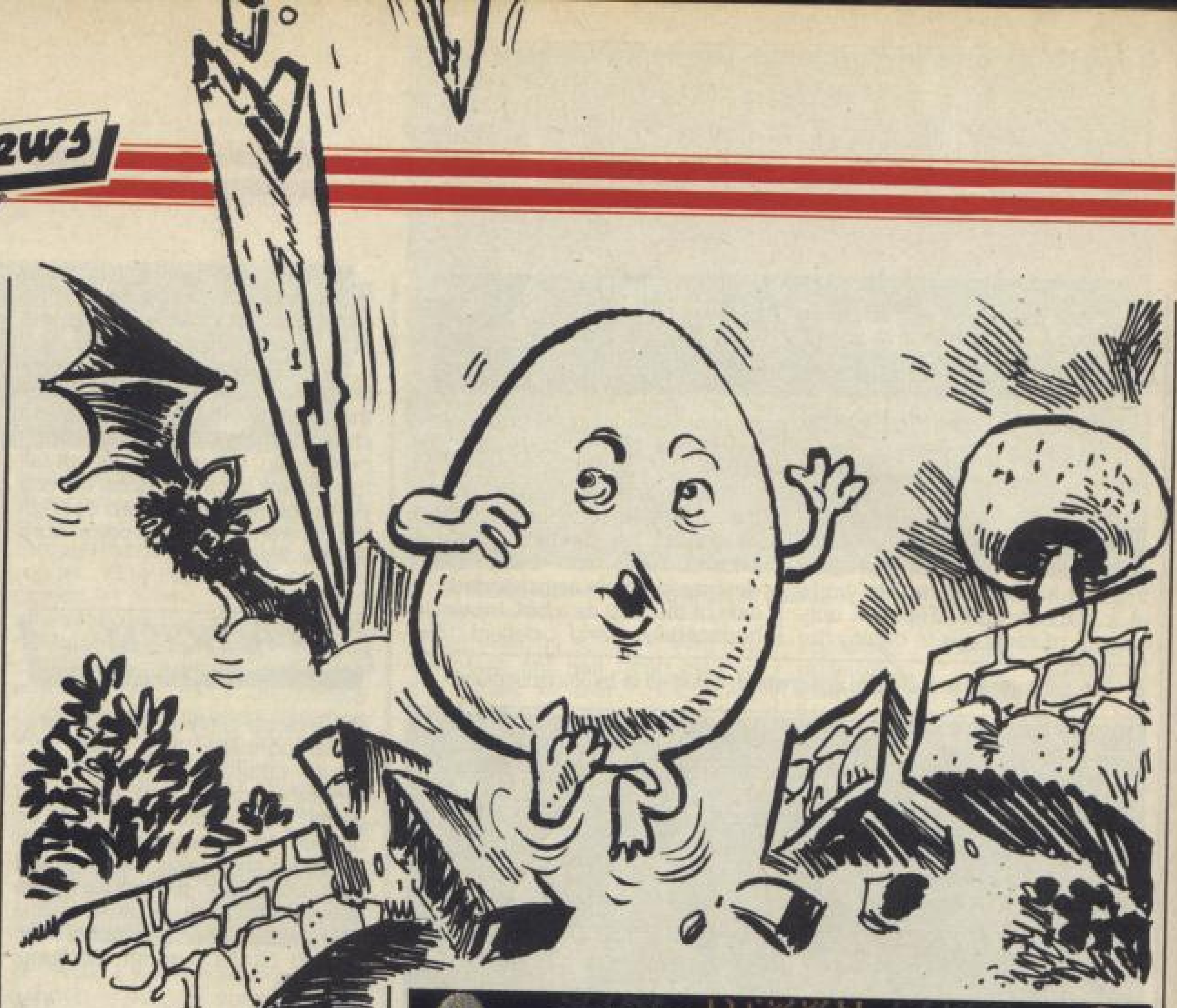
COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: below-average even in *Breakout* circles
Sound: hardly worth the effort . . .
Options: screen editor
General rating: a clone with little going for it

Presentation	28%
Graphics	10%
Playability	15%
Addictive qualities	8%
OVERALL	**11%**

DIZZY

Producer: **Code Masters**
Retail price: **£1.99**
Authors: **The Oliver Twins**



The sadistic Wizard Zaks works evil in the realm of Katmandu. To destroy his domination, Dizzy The Egg sets out to create a potion that can spike the warlock's spellmongering.

It's early closing down at the local supermarket, so Dizzy has to scour the land for the ingredients of his enervating brew, mentioned in an ancient recipe. And to gather together these unpleasant articles our ovular friend must walk, tumble and leap vertiginously through graveyards, forest and subterranean worlds full of lethal rivers and falling stalactites. Dizzy can also use magic mushrooms for extra-high bounding power – and all these tricks are useful, because points are awarded for every screen he completes.

But this isn't going to be just another Sunday-afternoon bound for our eggy hero. Many creatures and objects are under the wizard's control: bats with a cruel touch flutter through the air, Granny Smiths drop from trees toward our hero's noggin, rickety bridges disintegrate underfoot and spiders slip down their silken threads; other scuttlers patrol narrow tunnels . . . waiting.

During his travels, Dizzy may discover items that he can put to use – but only if he can first solve their purpose, perhaps with the help of the onscreen clues. With such things as spades, bags of gold and oilcans, Dizzy can open up whole new vistas of exploration that take him further in his quest.

When Dizzy has collected all the potion's ingredients he can return to the large cauldron, light it, and throw in the ingredients and the empty magic potion flask. Once filled, the flask can be carried to the evil wiz and smashed next to him. Katmandu is then released from his evil powers and Dizzy can look to the future as a free egg, not a potential omelette.



► Dizzy The Egg scours Nepal for his magic ingredients



► An eggstra picture – and we're not yolking, white?

NICK

" Anyone for scrambled eggs? Well, if not, don't get jumping too high in this fantastic new game from Code Masters. It's very similar to Firebird's cute Spiky Harold **(reviewed in CRASH Issue 29, the ubiquitous indexing minion tells me), which had a hedgehog instead of an egg. The animation is excellent; the graphics are brilliant, with colour complementing them perfectly; sound is well used, with a good tune at the start and spot FX and tunes in the game. I can't find ANYTHING nasty to say about** Dizzy**, it's just so addictive and neat. "**

85%

BEN

" Dizzy **may be a little too cute and cuddly for my liking, but there's a great game hidden within those small and furry folds! The average puzzle-solving/arcade adventure has never really appealed to me, so perhaps the puzzles in this one are much more logical – or perhaps it's just plain easy to play. Whatever it is, it's fab. The inlay, like most of Code Masters's, goes a little overboard – the word 'brilliant' appears four times. But it's true:** Dizzy **is one to have in your software collection. "**

77%

RICKY

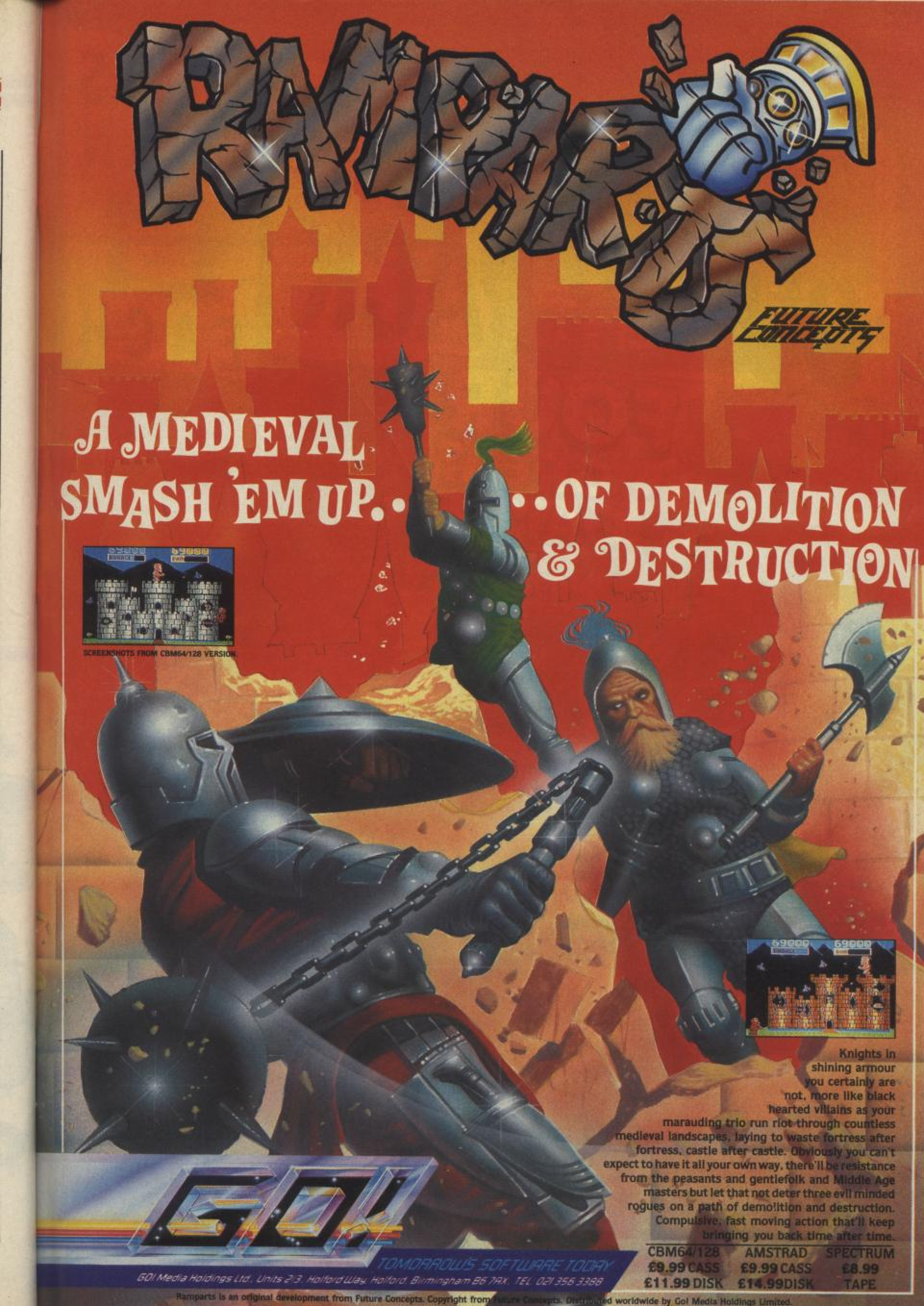
" Dizzy **is an appealing game with enough puzzles to keep your interest going for a while. The graphics are all rather cutesy – it's the sort of game that provokes your mum to say 'Aw, isn't that sweet' – though the number of things that can kill you can become quite distracting.** Dizzy **is a worthy product "**

72%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston
Graphics: very good cartoon-type graphics with plenty of colour
Sound: a good tune rattles away on the title screen but there are few FX
General rating: an enjoyable and graphically competent arcade puzzle game

Presentation	79%
Graphics	80%
Playability	79%
Addictive qualities	75%
OVERALL	**78%**



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YES PRIME MINISTER

Producer: **Mosaic**
Retail price: **£14.95**
Authors: **ODE**

After an undistinguished but eventful political career, Sir James Hacker is inexplicably elevated to the position of Prime Minister. With the competent (if not always straightforward) aid of senior civil servant Sir Humphrey Appleby and the straightforward (if not always competent) aid of Private Secretary Bernard Woolley, Hacker must make the most difficult decisions of his career.

And in *Yes Prime Minister* – a licence from the eponymous TV show – you take the role of Hacker, ensconced in an office full of icons: a telephone (calls report crises in the outside world), an internal intercom, a teletype, an ideas box, memos and a diary.

Hacker can leave his office to make visits to such places as the Foreign Office, the Cabinet Room, or his minions' offices – though they're not always in. (Those Whitehall lunches do drag on . . .)

PAUL

" When it comes to 'choice' games Mosaic Publishing has the industry sewn up, what with The Secret Diary Of Adrian Mole **and** The Archers **and now** Yes Prime Minister. **They're all the same – funny the first time, but then losing attraction. Running the country is all very well but none of the decisions you make in** Yes Prime Minister **have any bearing on the game, and I never felt in contact with my public – the action is limited to the confines of the very drab Prime Ministerial office. And after playing all the way through I didn't feel any compulsion to run the country again – especially not for almost £15. "**

55%

His diary gives a list of meetings, and a desk clock indicates how near an appointment is.

During the in-depth conversations, frank exchanges of views and wide-ranging discussions that he has with Appleby, Woolley, and other political colleagues such as the Foreign Secretary, Hacker is presented with sets of choices in a text-only format.

Each choice represents a different viewpoint and each has a difference consequence. The choices Hacker makes, 'advised' of course by his aides, affect his popularity in the opinion polls. To check that the voters still love him, this blundersome political supremo can open his office safe and discover his previous day's rating in the polls and his present popularity – on these numbers depends Hacker's future.

MIKE

" Yes Prime Minister doesn't hold the interest for long – after just four games I'd seen all the text, and though the rather thin humour works first time round things are very tedious thereafter. I did enjoy the odd parts of the TV series which my overworked schedule allowed me to see, and I find the computer version disappointing. The screen display is bright and functional, but still looks a little unattractive. I'd recommend Yes Prime Minister **only to fans, and then purely as a collectors's item. "**

49%

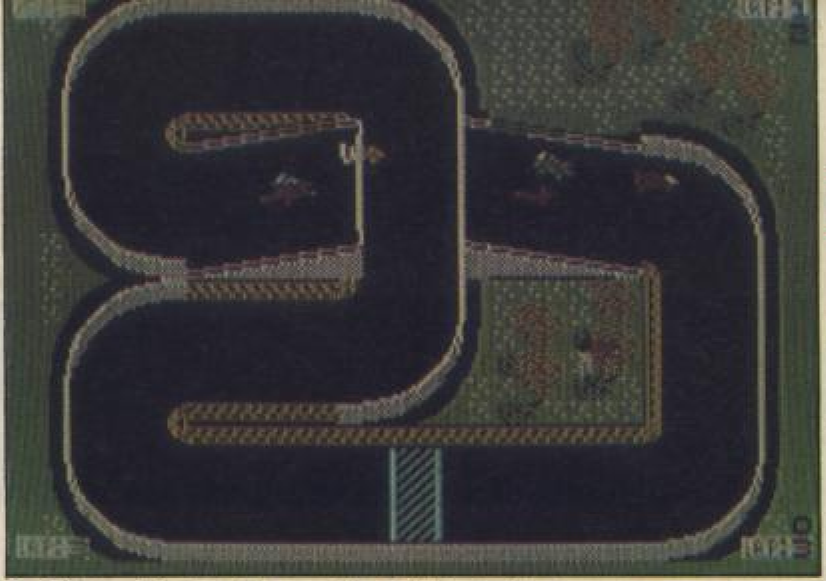
COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: excellent digitised faces, otherwise reasonable
Sound: limited
General rating: there's an interesting idea and some entertaining text here, but not much variety or real interaction

Presentation	77%
Graphics	58%
Playability	70%
Addictive qualities	44%
OVERALL	**56%**

▶ **Sir James Hacker's office in** *Yes Prime Minister* **– apologies for the awful wallpaper**





▶ *Supersprint***ing into the sunset in Activision's latest arcade licence**

SUPERSPRINT

Producer: **Electric Dreams**
Retail price: **£9.99**
Authors: **Software Studios**

Tear off the L-plates, pull off those furry dice and put to sleep that nodding dog – you're going racing in a *Supersprint* car, burning rubber in this Activision conversion (on the Electric Dreams label) of an Atari coin-op original.

You choose from eight circuits of different shapes and varying difficulty, competing with three other cars over a minimum of four laps.

And there's a two-player option, where the two players can have the track to themselves or face the further confusion of a third, computer-controlled car.

Constant concentration is essential as you steer your car around the tortuous corners of each track, accelerating over the tarmac. Should you collide with the side of the track at a slow speed you are merely delayed; pranging trackside at high speed causes your racing car to explode. A helicopter flies a new one out to you, but valuable time is lost.

On some circuits there are underpasses which you'll have to drive through blind, temporary short cuts that only *you* can use (to gain time on your mechanical adversaries), and ramps that enable you to leap over obstacles.

Random objects appear on the tarmac: you can drive over pads to earn bonus scores, and if three or more golden spanners are collected there's a bonus at the race's end. The bonuses include extra tyre traction, power for greater speed, turbo acceleration and extra scoring potential.

But it's not all plain driving. Oil slicks can send your car into a spin, water slicks delay you, and the tornado that improbably patrols the course sends your car whirling out of control.

When a race is over the times of the first three cars are given, complete with their fastest lap times.

NICK

" Well, I don't know about THE car-racing game – the graphics aren't anything to shout about, small cars on an uninteresting background. Still, there is some playability here even though I've never won a game. Jumps, tornadoes and the odd helicopter give it that extra boost of gameplay but I'm afraid it's not enough – sorry, Activision, this is a licence wasted. "

52%

PAUL

" Games like this are great fun in the arcades with people all around you and sound blasting out of the machine, but an atmosphere like that is very hard to create in the peace and quiet of your own home. And when the game on its own is transplanted into a tiny Spectrum, problems appear. The collision-detection is the worst problem of all; I often found myself stuck on the side of the track but not actually touching anything, which is terribly infuriating. It goes without saying that the two-player option improves the game immensely, but then YOU'RE making the fun, not the game you paid for. Supersprint **is effective up to a point but you can't do much with such a simple game. "**

56%

MIKE

" I expect Supersprint **is as good as we're going to get in this genre, but it's still not very good. The graphics are small (like the arcade original's), and though the game is quite playable I didn't find it very addictive, despite good reports of the original. Addicts of the arcade game might find this to their taste, but it lacks a little something. "**

65%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: small but colourful
Sound: limited
Options: choice of tracks, two-player option
General rating: *Supersprint* is a reasonable conversion, but it lacks the excitement of the arcade race

Presentation	71%
Graphics	50%
Playability	58%
Addictive qualities	57%
OVERALL	**58%**

CENTURIONS

Producer: **Reaktör**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Byte Engineers**

Doc Terror is after a stock of Tyron-Dichromate, a substance that can do more damage to the earth and its ozone layer than even the heaviest user of underarm deodorant.

Max, Jake and Ray are three mere mortals but on donning their Exoframe suits they become incredible fighting warriors – Centurions, fusions of man and machine. And only they can stop the evil Doctor's dastardly deeds.

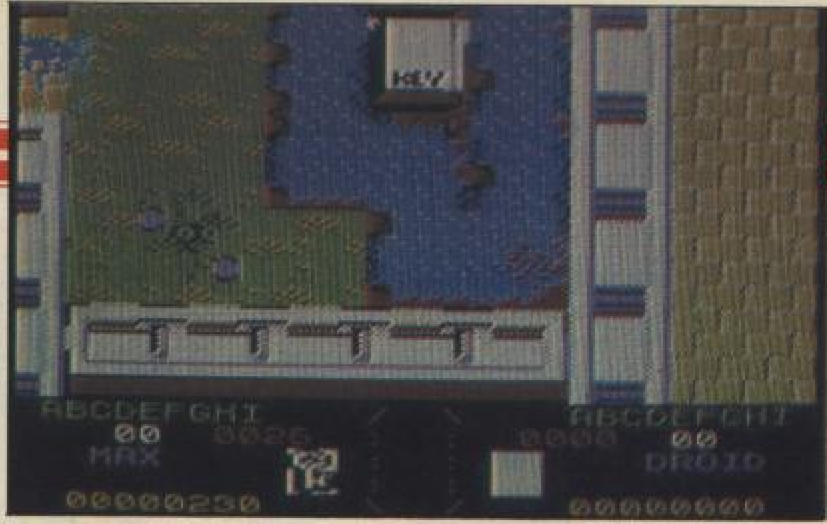
They begin life as powerless droids, but by manoeuvring itself onto a transformation pad a humble droid is changed into a Centurion.

As our heroes make their way through the landscape surrounding the Weapons Development Centre where the Tyron-Dichromate is held, hordes of malignant creatures come after them, howling for their hydraulic fluids. With their basic blasters, the Centurions can destroy these alien thugs, adding weapon upgrades when they've destroyed enough attackers to reveal collectible rectangular Quants.

Contact with an ordinary enemy reduces a Centurion's energy, but if Doc Terror himself is encountered and his image falls upon a Centurion, that warrior is returned to droid form. Back to the old transformation pad . . .

On each level there are six keys, all surrounded by air, sea or land, and only the Centurion with the capability to cross the encircling terrain can reach the key. When all keys have been collected then the next level can be reached.

With these keys the three different rooms of the Weapons Development Centre can finally be entered, and there the Centurions can dispose of the cases of dangerous chemical . . . by walking into them.



► Play 'hunt the Tyron-Dichromate' in Reaktör's *Centurions*

CRITICISM

● " **If you want a game in which you can hardly see your character, with trashy sound effects and boring gameplay, then rush out and buy** Centurions **today. The backgrounds cover up the main sprite terribly (a bit like** Wiz . . .**), so you have to strain your eyes just to see what's going on. Reaktör games still have that irritating loading sequence and no loading screen, so the presentation isn't fantastic.** Centurions **is a no-go area.** "

NICK **30%**

● *" If the TV show is anything like the game then I'm jolly glad I've never seen it. Centurions just doesn't work on the Spectrum; all the things that could go wrong have. The graphics use the weirdest masking technique I've seen in a long time, which makes the characters very hard to distinguish from the grassy background. Colour couldn't have been used in a more haphazard way – there's clash everywhere. And it's obvious from the outset that this is a straight translation from another machine, not at all customised to the Spectrum's capabilities. I just hope you buyers are more responsible about it than the programmers. "*

PAUL **22%**

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston
Graphics: shoddy use of colour over uninspiring characters
Sound: good original spot FX but poor tune
Options: definable keys
General rating: a poor licence of a potentially exciting subject

Presentation	48%
Graphics	24%
Playability	26%
Addictive qualities	27%
OVERALL	**23%**

WAR CARS (CONSTRUCTION SET)

Producer: **Firebird**
Retail price: **£2.99**
Author: **Clive Brooker**

Remember your days of model-car racing, when Dad trod accidentally on the carefully-laid track on the carpet, Mum thought it all made too much noise and the dog did himself irreparable intestinal damage by eating up a car?

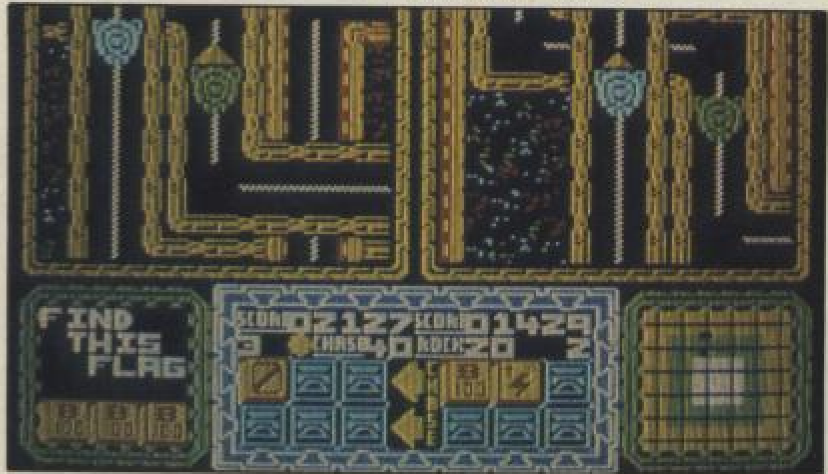
Well, forget them – now you can chase an opponent's vehicle around a racetrack, in hot pursuit along a series of roadways full of angularities and doglegs, all shown in bird's-eye view.

The cars' positions are shown on a overall map, and the area immediately around you is displayed on a split upper screen.

You can block an opponent's route by releasing a boulder, and along the chaseways are flags which can be collected by touch and are worth at least 100 points each.

Should the established track's attraction ever pall, then you can create up to five others by manipulating roadway sections on a design screen.

▶ **Is this** *Raid Over Spaghetti Junction* **or what?**



BEN

" War Cars **is incredibly simple but extremely compelling – to begin with. The appeal starts to wear off when you realise that the maze layout doesn't change once you've collected your six flags; it's a good thing there's a roadway designer or** War Cars **would get really boring.** "

68%

NICK

" War Cars **has the looks, sounds and ideas of the same author's** One Man And His Droid **and other such games, the only important difference being that here you can construct your own roads. The screen display is neatly set out and the roads overlap nicely, but the title screen is a mite overcrowded and the scrolling menus make it worse.**"

50%

COMMENTS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: jerky but distinctive
Sound: good 128K tune,

Options: the construction set is good, though a little difficult

General rating: an interesting maze/race game

Presentation	54%
Graphics	56%
Playability	56%
Addictive qualities	45%
OVERALL	**53%**

THUNDERCEPTOR and THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS

two games on one tape

Producer: **GO!**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Authors: **Ernieware**

This is not going to be a very pleasant job. Disease-infested spaceships are returning to Earth from the once healthy colony on Jupiter's moon, Io. They must not be allowed to reach their destination and spread their sickness.

In ***Thunderceptor***, one of two games on this tape from US Gold's recently-launched label GO!, you command one of the craft in a fleet sent to destroy the colonists. Your multidirectional spacefighter carries both Phaser and Super Phaser systems – the latter effective against large spacecraft – and a defensive shield. All these are served by a single, limited power supply, and the energy complement of each can be altered.

On encountering the 'Io-fleet', you are met by waves of attack craft varying in their manoeuvrability and fire power. At some stage large mother ships and fighters appear, and these must be hit many times with Phaser power, sometimes with unerring accuracy, before they succumb. Points are awarded for every craft destroyed.

Meteor storms, satellites and wrecks also add spice to this space battle.

After completing the first level, you can progress to the next of the five, receiving medals and promotion as you go.

Flying by the seat of your pants on a magic carpet in Old Baghdad while working for the military is the name of the game in ***The Fast And The Furious***, on the other side of the tape.

Your first mission is to deliver important papers to a base on the other side of the desert – but there's more to this silicon wasteland than sand, sand, more sand and cacti.

Though the desert is larger than the beach at Weston-super-Mare at low tide, the villains and brigands who live there seem to have no difficulty in finding you. Riding their shagpiles and Axminsters they come at you, and any contact with them, or with the fireballs that they unleash, loses you stamina.

You can return their fire – but be warned; you're not facing just a cutthroat band out to do you down, but also centipedes, dragons, bats and scorpions, any of which can inflict untold damage on even the hardiest carpeteer.

You can collect useful items by flying your carpet over them, in a sort of reverse hoovering marked by icon displays.

The objects collected, which include dollars, pounds, oil, hearts, flags, guns and musical notes, can be used in dealings with the villain's leader – he can be found at the end of each desert section. You can placate him by giving him the correct icons, and the result is a rise in your stamina level.

Once your dealings with the despicable rogue are finished, leap once more onto your carpet to do battle on three more levels with more dragons, more no-goods and more danger.

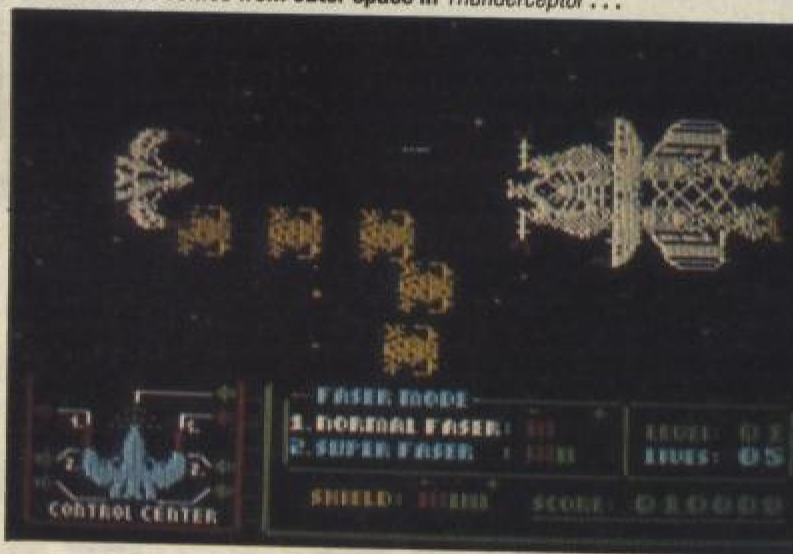
NICK

" GO! has really chosen the right name for The Fast And The Furious **– the gameplay is so fast you don't know what you're doing half the time! The enemies really speed along and firing at them as they go by can be a problem. Apart from the sickly colour, the graphics are well-defined, with some good animation here and there. But the spot FX aren't very good and at the start, where you'd expect to find a tune, there are birds singing (goodness knows why!). And though it's quite original, I doubt this game will appeal to the budding arcade player for long.**

As for Thunderceptor**, I've really had enough of all the recent** Zynaps **clones.** Xecutor **(reviewed last issue) was just** Zynaps **turned through 90 degrees, and** Thunderceptor **is simply** Zynaps **sped up with the backgrounds taken away. But the game is quite decent and the graphics are adequately detailed. Both the screen layout and the way the enemies move are similar to** The Fast And The Furious**; in fact you might think it's just the graphics that have been changed. "**

Thunderceptor	**82%**
The Fast And The Furious	**69%**

► **The threat comes from outer space in** *Thunderceptor* **. . .**



MIKE

" Thunderceptor **has all the feel of a well-programmed game and quite a lot of playability – but it doesn't last. Despite its fast gameplay and large graphics, it's simply not addictive.**

And a more appropriate title for the other game on this tape would be The Fast And The Furious But A Bit Unaddictive! **Again, it's very playable for a few minutes, but once you've adjusted to the speed (which certainly makes the game more interesting) and you know the first dozen attack waves, there's very little compulsion to carry on. "**

Thunderceptor	**58%**
The Fast And The Furious	**52%**

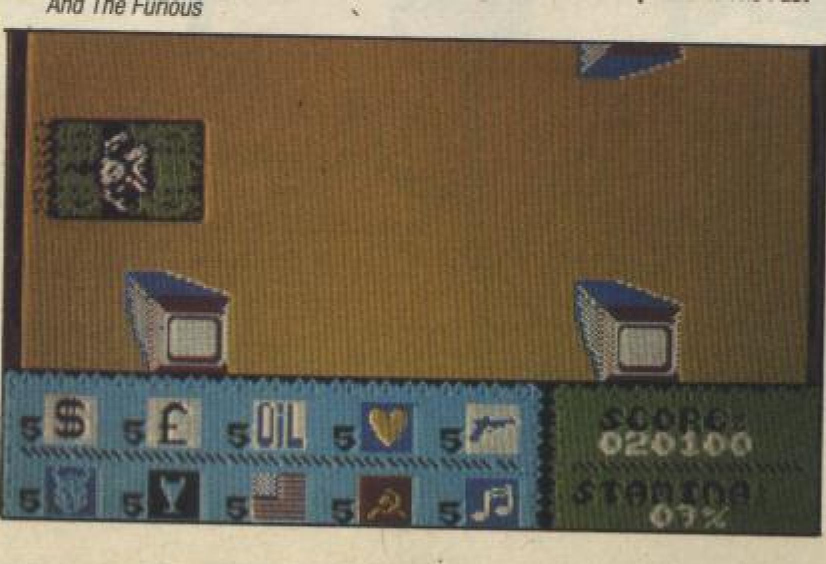
PAUL

" The Ernieware programmers have their act together when it comes to designing pretty graphics, but their problem is knowing what to do with them: Thunderceptor **is awfully boring and monotonous. Each section contains the same old ships over and over again in slightly different combinations. However, the individual graphics are exceptionally well-drawn and used with animation to match.**

The Fast And The Furious **is WEIRD; I've seen nothing like it in a long time. The game may basically be your old favourite shoot-'em-up, but the objects used are very strange; besides the usual bats and spiders there are also flying-carpet flights. As with** Thunderceptor**, the basic game construction is very simple and thus there's endless repetition. "**

Thunderceptor	**51%**
The Fast And The Furious	**68%**

► **. . . but Cam's magic carpet never gets beyond the atmosphere in** *The Fast And The Furious*



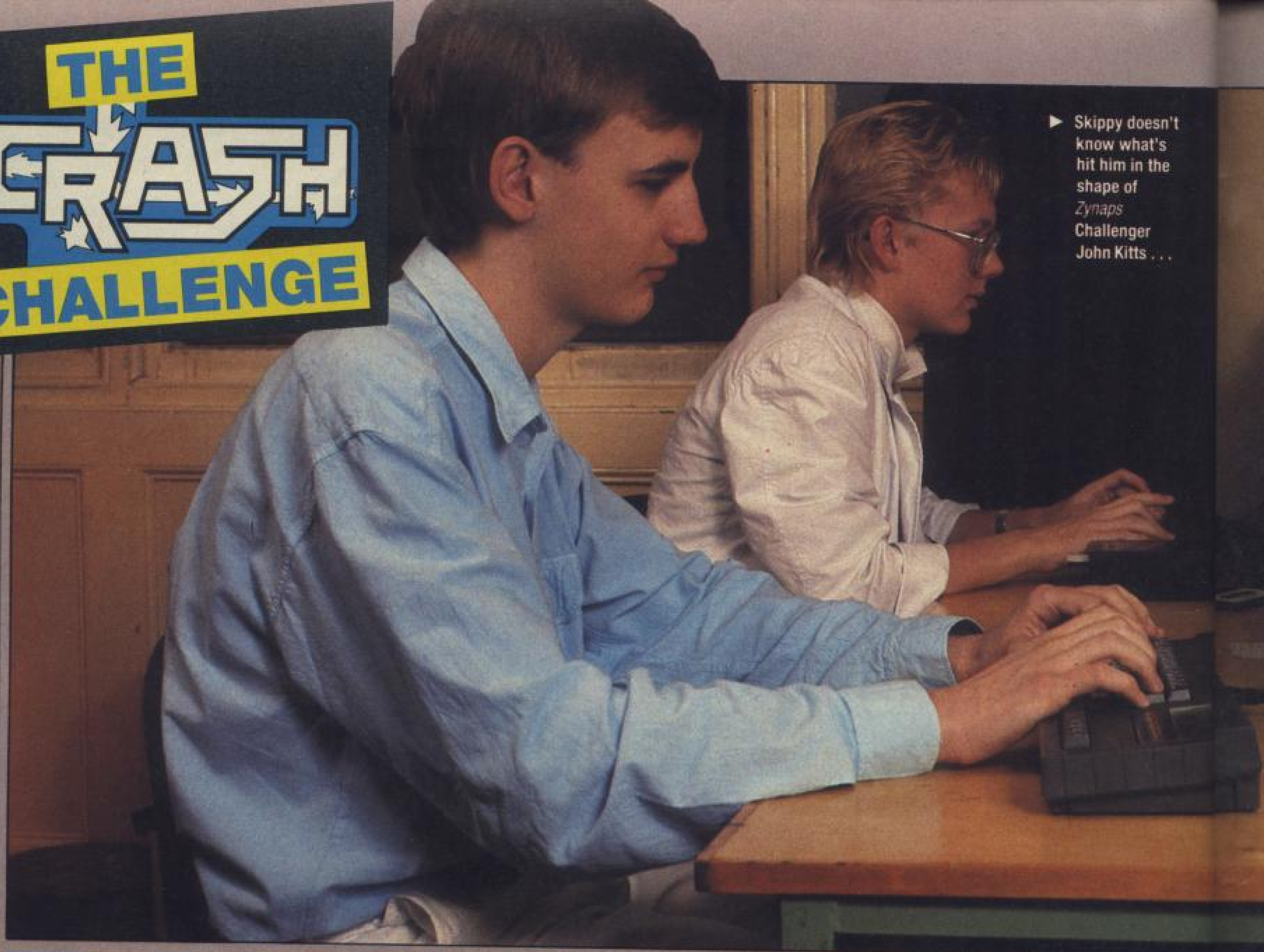
COMMENTS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: very fast and quite colourful
Sound: not an awful lot apart from a few bells and whistles
General rating: both are adequate shoot-'em-ups with average lastability

THUNDERCEPTOR	
Presentation	79%
Graphics	74%
Playability	65%
Addictive qualities	59%
OVERALL	**64%**


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THE CRASH CHALLENGE



► Skippy doesn't know what's hit him in the shape of *Zynaps* Challenger John Kitts . . .

PHOTOS: Roger Kean

DUNN TO DEA

HI and welcome to the CRASH back-room stadium, the venue for this month's CRASH Challenge. The game is Hewson's *Zynaps* and I'm NICK ROBERTS – I'll be here bringing you up-to-date news of the Challenge as it happens. The Challenge has three rounds – both contestants play a game of *Zynaps* in each round, and the high score wins that round. But the overall champion will have to win two rounds . . .

And now, while we're waiting for the players to arrive, a bit of background on today's game. Dominic Robinson's shoot-'em-up *Zynaps* was a Smash with 91% Overall in Issue 42 and Mike really liked it. Oh, what's this . . . it's MIKE 'SKIPPY' DUNN the intrepid reviewer! Armed only with a tube of styling mousse he strides into the practice room and dives for a copy of *Zynaps*.

After getting to the second level and saving it to disk (for future reference – of course) he's getting in a last half hour of alien-bashing before the equally intrepid Challenger JOHN KITTS arrives from Shirley, his home town in the West Midlands . . .

. . . and here John is now. John Kitts, PBMer, science-fiction fan and *Zynaps*-player extraordinary. Finally, after the poor CRASH reviewers (accompanied by the indescribably intrepid Barnaby Page) had been waiting in the rain outside the bus stop for ten minutes, John stepped onto the historic tarmac of Ludlow for the first time. (Being a kind sort of person who had two friends who wanted their names in CRASH, John gave me two hellos to say, so hello to Ted Webb and Ben Hynes.)

In the friendly CRASH tradition, the Challenger has been escorted through almost every public house in Ludlow in Skippy's desperate bid to find somewhere to sit and get John so drunk he couldn't tell one control key from the next – but when we finally found somewhere to sit amid the last of the summer tourists, John ordered a triple steakwich (for superstrength) and Coke (which adds life, a bit like 10,000 points).

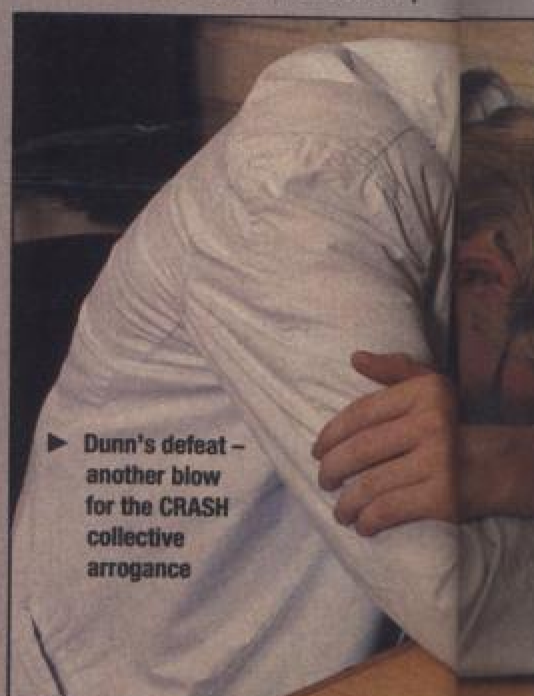
And so Skippy and John have prepared themselves for the CRASH Challenge – the quest for ultimate dexterity. And after a lot of monitor-swapping and computer-throwing we've finally got the show on the road, and as the crowd roars the two contestants are stepping into the spotlights. The battle commences.

ROUND ONE

John has one advantage over Skippy – he's got the hang of collecting extra fire power (being an expert at the game). Pow, zap, zap, booom! – Skippy is away. Armies of aliens loom up onto the screen and the fearless Mr Dunn shoots them away with his homing missiles. John, on the other hand, has by now got a target on the screen that enables him to almost treble his power against the enemy.

Skippy's game suddenly improves, and he gets to Level Two with 8,150 points on the clock. This level involves dodging asteroids by the million and shooting the odd alien to smithereens. Skippy doesn't seem to have very good coordination, though – he was blown up by a passing asteroid as he tried to cross the screen. He should be good at that sort of thing; he has to cross the main road in Ludlow on his way home!

John hasn't been far behind in the race for Level Two and now he's got there with 7,000 after collecting masses of points for extra fire power and aliens. The asteroid-dodging seems to come naturally to John, and he's nearing the end of the level with no trouble.



► Dunn's defeat – another blow for the CRASH collective arrogance



EATH

Skippy, however, is hanging onto his last life and spaceship pulp is nowhere to be seen.

SUDDENLY a band of enemy fighters zooms into view. Poor Mike didn't stand a chance – he's lost his last life with a shout of '!$%&#★#★#★☎☎!'. And John has entered Level Three with 17,250 points. This level is totally new to Mike, as the look on his face showed when he staggered over to John's red-hot Speccy for a glimpse of how *Zynaps* SHOULD be played. John's ship must have been indestructible as he scraped by the enemy missiles.

With 30,000 points put away and an extra life to play with, John seems to be on his way to the top. But alas every good thing must come to an end, and John's does in glory, with 37,150 points to his name and the fact that he has beaten Mike Dunn in Round One. The scores so far are:

JOHN:	37,150
MIKE:	24,625



ROUND TWO

After they'd stopped for a rest and a swig of Lilt, I finally got the two players back to their beeping computers to commence the second bout of joystick-ripping rage! John doesn't seem to be playing as well as before (perhaps Skippy's put something in his Lilt – who knows?), losing his first life at only 6,500 points to Skippy's 5,100.

But to make up for the lost life John is putting everything he has into his game. He's got to Level Two in hardly any time at all, notching up 10,425 points. By now Skippy has sussed that he's going to lose, so he's just taken his pinkies off the keyboard and his game has ended with only a mere 8,775 points!

But wait – Skippy's untimely demise has distracted John and while he laughed at the juvenile score on Skippy's high-score table he lost two, yes TWO lives (pride comes before a fall, *Lloyd's Grandma writes*).

John is clearly upset by the massive loss of life but he's trooping on in style. The game on his screen is going on and on into new dimensions and unknown levels. He's entered Level Three with 23,400! but it hasn't lasted long, yes, John Kitts has finally given in with a puny score of 23,575.

As in the previous Challenge, there's no need for a third round; the second-round scores ensure John's victory:

JOHN:	23,575
MIKE:	8,775

Well, the contestants have left the ring and the crowds has begun to disperse and go home from tonight's fantastic event. John 'The Mangler' Kitts was the overall winner and Mike 'Gawd he's good!!' Dunn lost. The hapless CRASH reviewer will have to practice hard next time to save our honour . . . And that brings us to the end of this CRASH Challenge special, so thank you for tuning in, I'm Nick Roberts, and look out for the next Challenge in Issue 48, the Christmas Special from channel CRASH.

GET SMASHED IN THE CRASH ZX SPECTRUM CHALLENGE

There may have been a few exceptional occasions on which CRASH reviewers were thoroughly trounced by high-scoring Challengers, but then everyone has bad days. This time we're taking no chances. All the reviewers – Robin Candy, Mike Dunn, Richard Eddy, Nick Roberts, Mark Rothwell, Ben Stone and Paul Sumner – have been sent to special Joystick Optimum Kinetics Education training camps where they're already practising for Challenges far into the future.

What we want from *you* is, well, someone foolhardy enough to challenge CRASH. Once again there's a wide choice of games: anything Smashed in 1987. ('1987' is defined in the CRASH Challenge Act as Issues 37-46 inclusive.)

Just choose your game and tell us your high score; then the Challenge Minion takes over, picking a Challenger and a reviewer by processes which are far too complicated to go into here.

But be warned, Challengers: the days of hapless reviewers are over. (They've all been issued with haps.)

Dear CRASH Challenge Minion

I just won't listen to reason, and with reckless disregard for my own safety I am challenging CRASH. Yes, I reckon I can beat any of your reviewers, hap for hap, in this game (a 1987 Smash):

..

The reason I'm so confident is that I've already scored:

..

So put *that* in your edge connector and smoke it.

NAME ....
ADDRESS ....
..
.... POSTCODE ....
TELEPHONE NUMBER ....
AGE ....

Enter now while confidence lasts – rush this form to: CRASH Challenge, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*

If you're selected for the Challenge we'll pay your fare to Ludlow and back home, feed you while you're here, and quite possibly pull the plug out on your Spectrum while you're playing.

WINNERS & PRIZES



SLEAZY SUMMERWEAR

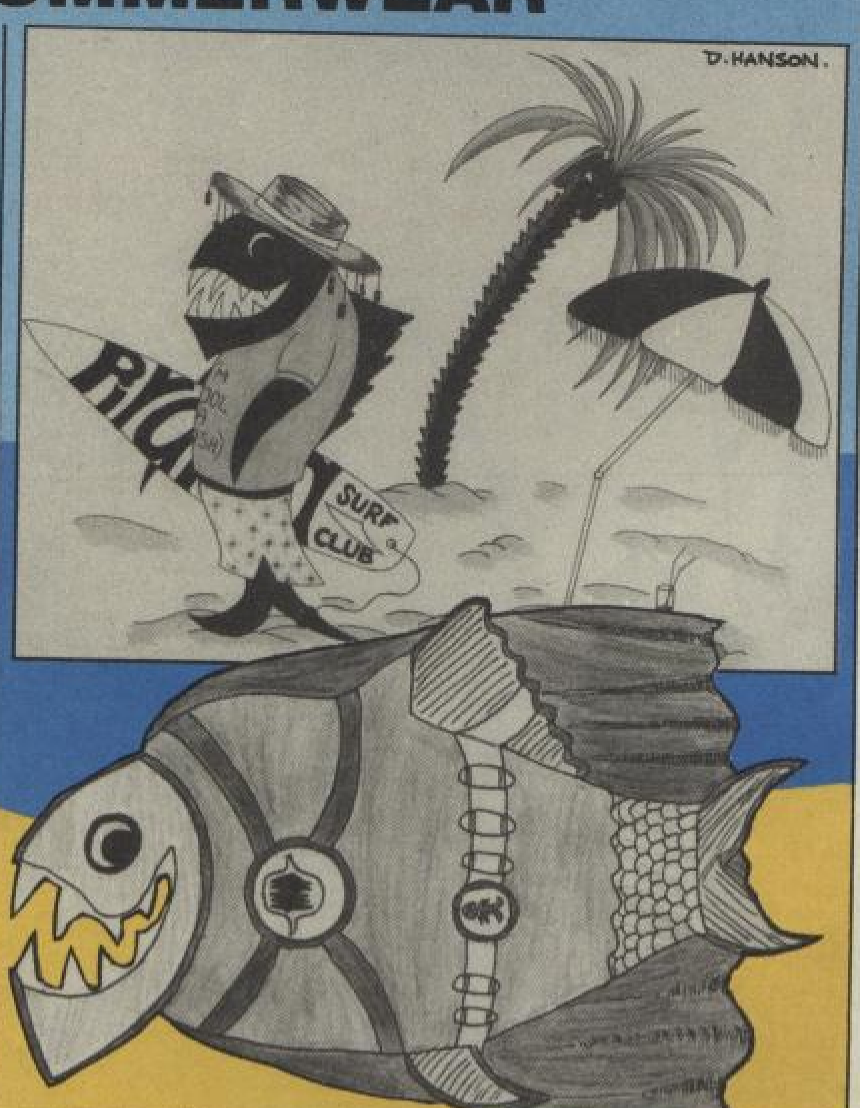
Piranha's penchant for all things fishy showed itself in this comp, where **Darren Hanson** of Oxford, OX5 1BN won a copy of *The Big Sleaze*, £5 Canon cinema voucher and membership of the Piranha Fin Club – by designing a watery wardrobe for the eponymous piranhas.

Four other winners are each receiving a copy of *The Big Sleaze* and a £5 Canon cinema voucher. They are:

Paul Wakeling, Leicestershire, LE6 0DE; Christopher Pearcey, West Yorkshire, HD3 4AU; Edward Burton, Beds, MK45 4HT; Jeff Fuge, Bristol, BS5 8SN.

And 35 runners-up receive a copy of the adventure each:

Tony Marshall, N.Humberside, HU15 2UA; Umran Salim AKhtar, Surrey, CR4 3PB; Philip Corbett, Warks, CV8 1DJ; Justin Rose, S.Wales, CF3 8AE; Stephen Ward, Co.Clare, Eire; Catherine Fatrick, Berks, RG4 7HS; David Binns, Cornwall, TR10 9HB; Leslie Cutting, Isle Of Wight, PO33 4LR; Mark Mayfield, Bucks, HP8 4JB; Mark Sibson, W.Yorks, WF5 0PF; Peter Carroll, Tyne & Wear, NE40 4XF; Daniel Watkins, Worcestershire, DY12 1JS; Peter Robinson, Kent, CT9 4NA; Anthony Johnson, London, NW2 5TA; Stephen Alder, Glos, GL5 4PT; Alan Walton, Lancs, BB2 3RW; Paul Howard, Middx, EN1 3NS; Nicola McNeilis, Liverpool, L12 9EP; Mark Peters, Essex, SS5 6BJ; Brett Nainggolan, Surrey, RH6 9LE; Paul Tuersket, Wiltshire, SN15 5AJ; John Alexander, Cheshire, CW8 1LZ; Michael Burns, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 8UJ; Chris Stewart, Merseyside, L36 4NU; Glenn Taylor, Gwynedd, N.Wales; Paul McCullough, Co.Down, Ireland, BT34 1EE; James Shephard, Essex, CO6 1BJ; West Midlands, DY5 2QQ; Simon P Broder, Sunderland, SR5 5BL; Anthony Homefray, Wilts, SP1 1SQ; Graham Leech, Cumbria, CA2 7LZ; Mr D A Schofield, Staffordshire, B77 2NS; A.M.R Fernando, London, SW16 2XL; Paul Grimshare, S.Wales, CF4 6JX; Nikki Harber, Kent, BR5 3DX.



THE VERY LOVELY ATHENA

Ye goddesses! The eponymous delectable deity only had to wave an Ocean sports bag stuffed with goodies and the entries came down like thunderbolts. (*What goodies? – Goodies Ed* Oh, 12 Ocean/Imagine games, including *Athena*, two T-shirts, a mug and a bundle of posters. – Comps Minion)

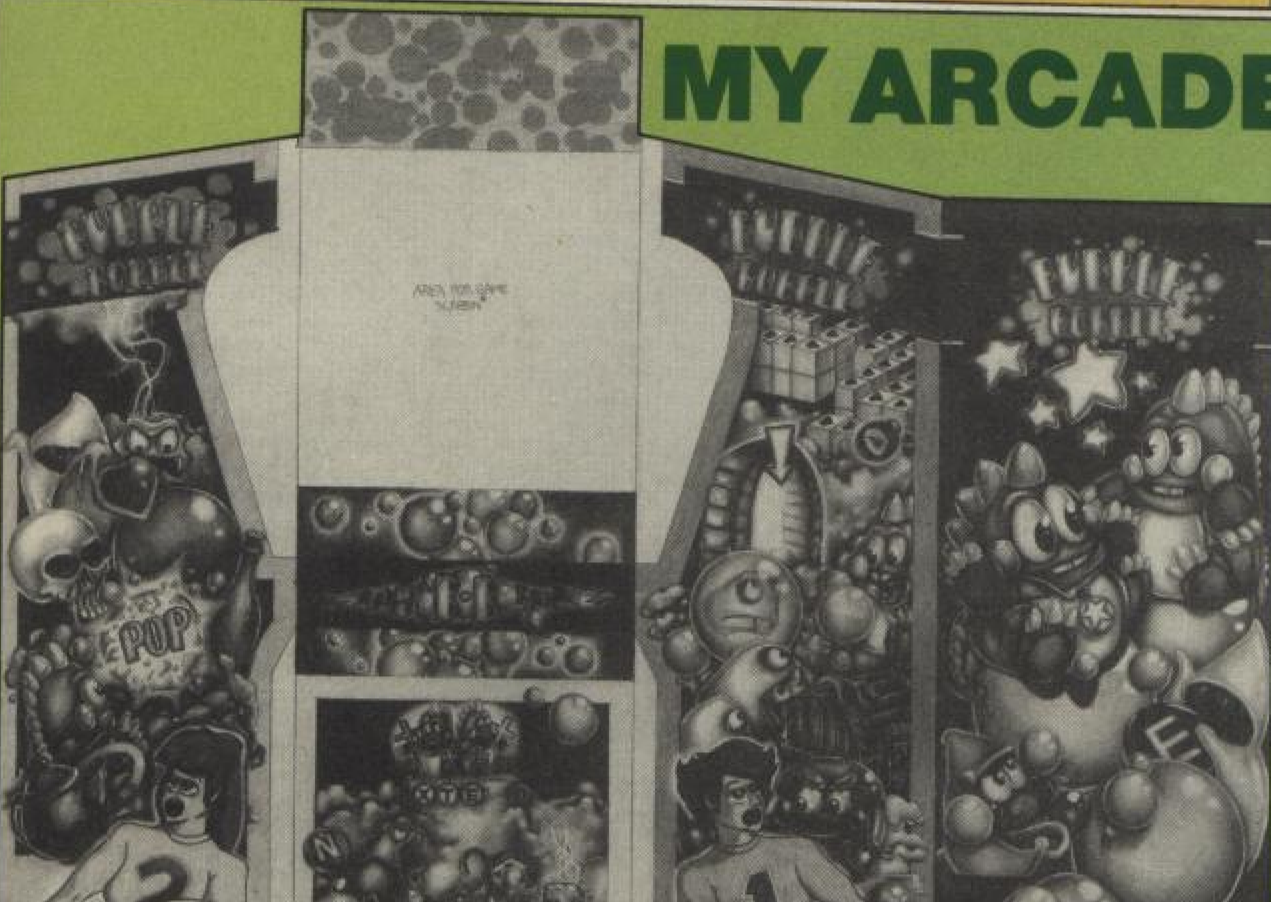
Five winners get those bags in full:

Mark Blackhurst, Notts, NG4 2QR; Mr S I Romain, Wilts, SN15 2PH; Karl Anderson, Devon, PL20 7AH; Simon Bramhall, Lancs, FY5 1RL; Ryan Banwell, Suffolk, IP27 0JW.

And 25 runners-up each receive a copy of *Athena* (the game, not the goddess):

Warren Moss, Surrey, SM5 1PG; J R Martin, Middx, UB10 8LS; Ray Casson, Cumbria, CA28 8SQ; Jason Williams, Birmingham, B28 0RD; Mark Fear, Berkshire, SL6 7DP; Ian Sivertson, Liverpool 4, L4 3SF; Michael Stevens, Liverpool, L18 7JS; Lee Reveley, West Midlands, CV3 6HT; Andrew Read, Suffolk, IP6 9JX; Paul Howard, Middx, EN1 3NS; Matthew Callard, West Yorkshire, LS28 7NP; P C Stubbs, Staffordshire, ST13 5BB; Lee John Smith, Herts, AL10 0JF; Matthew Johnson, Warwickshire, CV31 1UQ; Tom Baldwin, Derbyshire, DE5 2TQ; Gary Clark, Central Region, FK2 9JG; R J Spencer, Essex, S57 5JH; Jon Sendel, Sheffield, S8 8DU; Robert Benson, Derby, DE2 2BR; James Hoare, Birmingham, B30 1DL; Danield Watkins, Worcestershire, DY12 1JS; Mathew Hassall, Cheshire, CH3 5RX; N A Hill, Liverpool, L19 1RQ; Scott Fletcher, Sheffield, S3 8AT; Dave Cannon, Gloucester, GL51 6LY.

MY ARCADERETTE



CRASH and ZZAP! alike were flooded with cutout arcaderettes answering this two-mag challenge: to design an arcade console for *Bubble Bobble, recently Smashed in its Speccy conversion by Firebird.*

The big winner was **Matt Lyon** *of Hampshire RG22 5RH, who wins . . . a Bubble Bobble* machine, of course. These 25 runners-up receive a copy of the game each:

William White, Hants, GU12 4SU; Emma Sharp, Lancs, PR2 4NS; Paul Tuersley, Wiltshire, SN15 5AJ; David Bardwell, Herts, SG9 0NU; David Holme, Merseyside, L45 8N; Alex Madigan, West Midlands, DY8 4BQ; Chris Scott, Shropshire, TF9 4BU; Deniz Ahmet, London, SE15 4NP; Mark Bell, West Midlands, B75 6SP; Richard Mullins, Wales, D70 8JG; Paul Turland, Birmingham, B38 8SX; Paul Kirk, Norwich, NR10 5JE; Scott Hemsley, Scotland, KY1 2RL; David Croxier, Tyne & Wear, DH5 9QY; Stephen Ward, Co.Clare, Eire; Steven Martin, West Midlands, DY5 2QQ; Ben Everett, Leicester, LE3 1AT; Paul Galbraith, Tyne & Wear, SR3 4AJ; Xann, Ireland, BT65 4AB; Graham Randall, Kent, BR2 7DQ; Kevin Payne, Avon, BS18 2RZ; Marcus Winch, Reading, RG5 3DU; Mark Watkins, Bucks, HP7 9BB; Adam Cheyne, Aberdeen, AB2 5NA; Stephen Bell, Manchester, M26 0RZ.

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WANTED Issues 1 & 2 of CRASH. Will swop for Quickshot V Joystick (still boxed). They must be in good condition. Phone Richard on 0326 280822.
CRASH FOR SALEcomplete set of CRASH plus two CRASH binders, good condition. Issue 1-45 will not seperate, £70 o.n.o. John Clarke, *6 Kemmel Avenue, Sharston, Manchester, M22 4QS.* Phone Manchester 491 2726.
COMPLETE CRASH COLLECTION Issues 1-44. Most in very good condition, all complete. £25 excluding postage. Chris Davies, *3 Fields Park Avenue, Newport, Gwent, NP9 5BG.* Tel 0633 62405.
WANTED ISSUE 4 of CRASH, will pay £3 if in good order. Phone Martin Craig on*031 554 8597 after 6 pm*
50 SPECTRUM MAGAZINES CRASH, Your Sinclair, Sinclair User will swap for anything, MSX or will sell if you have anything. SAE to M Cruickshank*37 Glenisla Court, Rattray, Blairgowrie, Perthshire, Scotland, PH10 7AX*

FANZINES

WANTED Your pokes, hints and tips for a new Poke Mag. Send them to: M Hobbs, *27 Holcon Court, Redhill, Surrey, RH1 2JZ.*
FANZINE for Spectrum (48k or 128k). Just send 20p and an A4 SAE to Dragon's Roar, *9 Greenthorne Close, Edgworth, Bolton, BL7 0BL.*
PLAYCHIP a fanzine in York for readers anywhere. Only 40p per issue. Up to issue 4 available. Contact Jamie Tudor, *88 Stockton Lane, York, YO3 0BS* or Phone 0904 424083.
SPECTRUM TELEMAG The Ultimate magazine supplied monthly, contains reviews, news, letters, penpal section, personal adverts and pokes. For details send a SAE to Paul Dungey, *Spectrum Telemag, 46 Green Lane, Penryn, Cornwall, TR10 8QJ.*
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ZX SPECTRUM

THE CLASSIFIEDS



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HARDWARE SWAP

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WANTED PEN PALS around the world. English spoken – Many Games. Ledoyen Sylvain, *27 Avenue Des Ecoles, Wissous, 91320, France.*
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14 YEAR OLD SPECTRUM PLUS OWNER seeks penpal who can help teach how to hack and how to program in machine code. Paul Tuersley, *Windeview, Brinkworth, Chippenham, Wilts, SN15 5AJ.*
WANTED male or female penpal. I have over 200 originals please send photo if possible. I am also heavily into Dire Straits and The Boss. I am 18 and on the dole. John Favager, *24 Hawkins Road, Neston, South Wirral, Cheshire, L64 9TB.*
WANTED FEMALE PENPAL aged 13 with Speccy. Write to Fiddle, *29 Elm Grove, Hampden Park, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN22 9NN.*
14 YEAR OLD MALE seeks to find female GAC User, 14-15 years old. Would also like to swap games or swap copies. Stuart Smith, *7 Strathmore Crescent, Wombourne, Wolverhampton, WV5 9BD.*
PEN PALS WANTED to swap games with. I have got over 300 titles including *Exolon*and*Game Over*. I get new games every week. Dave Mitchell, *19 Glanvill Road, Street, Somerset, BA16 0TN.*
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GAMES TO SWAP I have quite a number of Spectrum games which I wish to swap with Spectrum owners in Singapore. Contact Tan Teck Hong, *Blk 57, Marine Terrace, $08-117, Singapore 1544, Singapore.*

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WANTED flight sims and other software to swap. Also a Spectrum Plus owner for a penpal. Write to Tyrone Davies, *21 Llanfair Road, Llandovery, Dyfed, Wales, SA20 0AD.*

SWAP HEAD OVER HEELS for*Renegade*or sell for £4 o.n.o. Phone Peter Crooks 0942 55462 Now! (Please).

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HUNDREDS OF GAMES TO SWAP , old and new, send your list for mine to: Steve Moore, *37 Wellers Grove, Cheshunt, Waltham Cross, Herts, EN7 6HU.*

SWAP ORIGINAL *My Jetpal*and *Crazy Golf* for *Your Hunchback III.* Write to: Dene Gisbertz, *Marktsingel 58, Echt, 0102 VX, Netherlands.* Original only.

JOIN THE BEST join the Super Swappers Club! Swap all your unwanted software. For more details send s.a.e to: S.S.C, *Dept.C), 27 Mansfield Road, Eastwood, Notts.* Don't be left out!!!

I HAVE MILLIONS OF GAMES to swap. Please send your list to: Nikolai Christensen, *Kildevej 15, 8600 Silkeborg, Denmark.*

WILL SWAP ***GHOSTS 'N' GOBLINS*** *Sidney Affair, Super Soccer* and *Gyroscope* for *Exolon.* Phone Steve on 0473 729532 after 4 pm

GAMES TO SWAP Send me your list for mine. Wanted: Bombjack 2 and Wonderboy and I've got 350 games and more. Paul Shanks,*57 Outer Circle, Taunton, Somerset*

The CRASH Classifieds continue to pour in – if your ad isn't featured this month, don't despair! We'll do our best to get it in ASAP ono (as they say in classifieds), and if the worst comes to the worst (which it usually does these days) you can always send the ad in again. Don't forget to fill out the whole form, give unflinching obedience to the small print below, and **USE BLOCK CAPITALS!**

1 Individuals and small organisations such as fanzines and homegrown-software publishers are welcome to use the CRASH classifieds, but professional businesses cannot. Paid-for classifieds for businesses will probably be introduced soon.

2 Classified ads should not be more than 30 words long (numbers, postcodes etc count as one word each), and should be written in the boxes provided; there is no box-number service, so **YOUR AD COPY MUST INCLUDE YOUR ADDRESS AND/OR PHONE NUMBER.**

3 **Classified ads must be submitted on a CRASH classifieds form, or a photocopy of the form.**

4 Absolutely no ads for selling or swapping pirated software or which encourage software piracy will be accepted.

5 CRASH reserves the rights to edit, publish and not publish classified ads without reference to the advertiser, and the magazine is not liable for any loss caused to advertisers through their own wording of ad copy or the appearance or nonappearance of ads.

6 If you send an ad in PLEASE don't ring us up asking when it's going to be published – we'll just print as many in each issue as whingeing Lloyd lets us . . .

WRITE YOUR AD COPY IN THE BOXES, CHOOSE A HEADING, AND SEND THIS FORM (OR A PHOTOCOPY) TO: THE CLASSIFIEDS, CRASH, *PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB*

WRITE AD COPY HERE . . .

HEADINGS (TICK ONE)

- CRASH BACK NUMBERS (OFFERED OR WANTED) ☐
- FANZINES ☐
- HARDWARE SALES ☐
- HARDWARE SWAP ☐
- HARDWARE WANTED ☐
- HOMEGROWN SOFTWARE ☐
- PBM ☐
- PEN PALS ☐
- SOFTWARE SALES ☐
- SOFTWARE SWAP ☐
- SOFTWARE WANTED ☐
- OTHER ☐

I WANT A FREE CRASH CLASSIFIED!

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

.... **POSTCODE** ....

TELEPHONE NUMBER ....

CRASH ZX SPECTRUM MAIL ORDER

GREAT NEW AGGIE BUYS AT GREAT NEW AGGIE PRICES

A CRASH Smash

up to 20% off FULL-PRICE games including p&p!

THUNDERCATS
Elite £6.40 (was £7.95)

BUBBLE BOBBLE
Firebird £6.40 (was £7.95)

I,BALL 2
Firebird Silver (see BUDGET BREAKS)

WIZBALL
Ocean £6.40 (was £7.95)

MERCENARY
Novagen £7.95 (was £9.95)

AND THEN THERE'S . . .

YES, PRIME MINISTER Mosaic
CENTURIONS Reaktör £6.40
SUPER SPRINT Activision £7.95
XOR Logotron £6.40
THUNDERCEPTOR/THE FAST AND THE FURIOUS GO! £6.40
RED L.E.D. Starlight £6.40
OUTCAST CRL £7.20
MYSTERY OF THE NILE Firebird £6.40
ACTION FORCE Virgin £6.40
EVENING STAR Hewson £6.40
SAMURAI TRILOGY Gremlin Graphics £6.40
πr^2 Mind Games £7.20
MEAN STREAK Mirrorsoft £6.40
SUN STAR CRL £7.20
HOW TO BE A COMPLETE BASTARD Virgin Games £6.40
REBEL Virgin Games £7.95
GFL CHAMPIONSHIP FOOTBALL Gamestar £7.99
CHAMPIONSHIP BASKETBALL Gamestar £7.99
CHAMPIONSHIP BASEBALL Gamestar £7.99
GAME OVER Imagine £6.40
HYBRID Starlight £7.20
LAST MISSION US Gold £6.40
THE FIFTH QUADRANT Bubble Bus £7.20
THE TUBE Quicksilva £6.40
FLUNKY Piranha £6.40
THE ARMAGEDDON MAN Martech £10.40

HOTSHOTS

INDIANA JONES
US Gold £6.40

JACK THE NIPPER II IN COCONUT CAPERS
Gremlin Graphics £6.40

HYSTERIA
Software Projects £6.40

MASK I
Gremlin Graphics £6.40

MOONSTRIKE
Mirrorsoft £6.40

BALLBREAKER
CRL £6.40

XECUTOR
ACE £6.40

TRANTOR – THE LAST STORMTROOPER
GO! £6.40

SOLOMON'S KEY
US Gold £7.20

BUDGET BREAKS

Buy THREE £1.99 games and GET ONE £1.99 game FREE!

Buy THREE £2.99 games and GET ONE £2.99 game FREE!

Take your pick from the budget bundle

£2.99 GAMES
WAR CARS Firebird Silver
HOLIDAY IN SUMARIA Pirate Software
MOTOS M.A.D.
ANGLEDRAUGHTS GENIUS Rack-It
OCEAN CONQUEROR Rack-it

£1.99 GAMES
WHITE HEAT Code Masters
ATV SIMULATOR Code Masters
DIZZY Code Masters
PARK PATROL Firebird Silver
SUPERNOVA Players
CALL ME PSYCHO Pirate Software
SMASH OUT! Pirate Software
RAPID FIRE Mastertronic
I, BALL 2 Firebird Silver
GRAND PRIX SIMULATOR Code Masters

PLEASE NOTE: this offer is subject only to the discounts detailed above; other discounts such as CRASH subscribers' extra discounts and the normal CRASH Mail Order bulk-buying discounts do not apply to games sold through this offer.

The games above were reviewed in Issues 43, 44, 45 or 46 of CRASH, and *most* are available, but CRASH cannot guarantee that production copies are ready yet. If in doubt give Aggie (alias Carol Kinsey) a ring on (0584) 5620 to find out whether the delay will be longer than 28 days.

LAST MONTH CRASH PRINTED AN INCORRECT TELEPHONE NUMBER FOR MAIL ORDER, DRIVING AN INNOCENT LUDLOW HOUSEHOLDER TO DISTRACTION! PLEASE NOTE THE CORRECT NUMBER: (0584) 5620.

SPECIAL DISCOUNT OFFER

I would like to order the following game(s) as they're at such fab and groovy prices thanks to Aggie's sudden burst of generosity. I've listed below what I would like and I've enclosed a cheque or postal order for the correct amount, made payable to **NEWSFIELD LIMITED**.

Prices include postage, packing and VAT in the UK. **Overseas Orders**: please **add £1.00 per order** for Europe, and **£1.50** (normal mail) or **£2.50** (air mail) **per order** for all other countries.

Name **CR45**
Address ....
....
....
Postcode ....

PLEASE DEBIT MY VISA/ACCESS ACCOUNT £

I wish to pay by Visa/Access (delete as applicable)

Signature Expiry Date

Please Charge My Account No:

FULL-PRICE GAMES

TITLE	PRICE
	SUBTOTAL £

BUDGET GAMES

TITLE	PRICE
	SUBTOTAL £

FREE BUDGET GAMES

	P&P included
	TOTAL – PAYMENT ENCLOSED £

MAIL ORDER, PO BOX 20, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

CRASH ZX SPECTRUM

IN THE LAND OF THE BLIND THE ONE EYE'D MAN IS KING

"More challenging and complex than Chess"

(Lee Rodwell – The Times, September 1987)





Actual Atari ST screen shots



Graphics vary according to format

Spectrum £9.95

Commodore 64/128 £9.95 (£14.95 Disk)

Atari ST £14.95

Amstrad £9.95 (£14.95 Disk)

PUBLISHED BY ENDURANCE GAMES UNDER LICENCE FROM FINGER PRODUCTS LTD.
ENDURANCE GAMES, UNIT 1, BAIRD ROAD, ENFIELD, MIDDLESEX. 01-804 8100. TLX 295944.
ENDURANCE GAMES IS A DIVISION OF PRISM LEISURE CORP PLC.

FANZINE FILE



Computers, symbols of the paperless world, have more magazines covering them than almost any other hobby. Besides the commercial titles which count their circulations in tens of thousands, there's a host of homegrown fanzines which count their success in 10p pieces.

Old, new, borrowed, green-and-yellow like the old *Bug* – BARNABY PAGE investigates the Spectrum's underground press.



THE RANGE of fanzines is striking; we're receiving new titles almost every week now, as well as longer-established, better-known zines. ***The Bug*** celebrated its third birthday and 31st issue with a much-touted redesign, but in fact it's still the same plain look, enhanced by clearer reproduction on white paper (which will always be better than dark colours for nonprofessional printing). The screen shots are still very dark.

Perhaps the best thing in the latest *Bug* is its profile and analysis of Piranha; but the reviews are still rather insipid, relying too much on the old black-and-white good game/bad game distinction, and the two moving spirits, Jaron Lewis and Jeffrey Davy, have their pictures in three times in the one issue. Even CRASH isn't *that* self-indulgent!

Still, it's worth keeping an eye on *The Bug*, if only for the pleasurable irritation its increasingly contrived political content can cause.

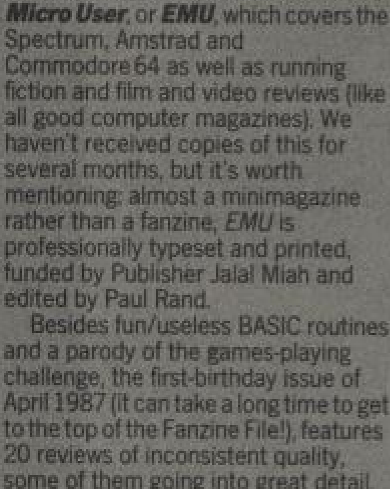
THE BUG'S CATCHING

Plus, which was launched in June 1986 after Editor Raymond Mortimer had thought about it for two years, shows *Bug*gish influence in its thrown-together layout and A5 format (A5 pages are half the size of CRASH pages). It's more of a straightforward computer mag, though, packing reviews, adventures, programming tips and all sorts of jottings into every available corner. (But leaving almost two pages blank, apparently for nonexistent 'late news', is a bit of a cheat!)

Unlike *The Bug*, *Plus* is Spectrum-specific; like *The Bug*, it claims a 'new look'.

At the other end of the spectrum – the disk drive end – is ***Entertainment Micro User***, or ***EMU***, which covers the Spectrum, Amstrad and Commodore 64 as well as running fiction and film and video reviews (like all good computer magazines). We haven't received copies of this for several months, but it's worth mentioning: almost a minimagazine rather than a fanzine, *EMU* is professionally typeset and printed, funded by Publisher Jalal Miah and edited by Paul Rand.

Besides fun/useless BASIC routines and a parody of the games-playing challenge, the first-birthday issue of April 1987 (it can take a long time to get to the top of the Fanzine File!), features 20 reviews of inconsistent quality, some of them going into great detail. Screen shots are indistinct, but there's some striking original artwork.



APPLE AND CHIPS

Another finely-produced magazine is ***Microchip*** from Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, a year old with just four issues under its editorial belt. *Microchip* is produced at the editors's school on an Apple Macintosh Plus: written on *WriteNow*, designed on *PageMaker*, and output on a LaserWriter at 300-dot-per-inch resolution with graphics from *SuperPaint* – all a far cry from the supposedly humble Spectrum to which the mag's devoted.

It looks beautiful, but perhaps *PageMaker* isn't used enough; *Microchip* looks more like a book than a magazine, with every page repeating the same format of three justified columns (columns where both the left and right margins are straight vertical lines, like CRASH review columns). The graphics are effective, but again it seems the Mac software isn't used to its full potential. Editorially, there are good adventure and tips sections, the latter tellingly entitled Software Solutions with an excellent Mac-made map. At 14 pages it's thin, but there's great potential in *Microchip*.



IF REM+RAM ≤ SUM THEN GOTO SUM

Visually far less flashy, ***REM*** (which has merged with ***RAM*** just for the latest issue, their tenth and third respectively) is one of the best-written Spectrum fanzines around, despite an occasional overdose of wisecracking and a weak RPG section. (I think that's properly part of *REM*; the distinction isn't clear). The review percentage system is identical to the CRASH system before its recent overhaul; indeed, that CRASH influence is evident in many fanzines.

In this merged issue, *REM*, *RAM*, *ROM* or whatever it is also deals with the *Barbarian* Maria Whittaker ad controversy and the sexism-in-software issue far more level-headedly than *The Bug* makes its ideological points.

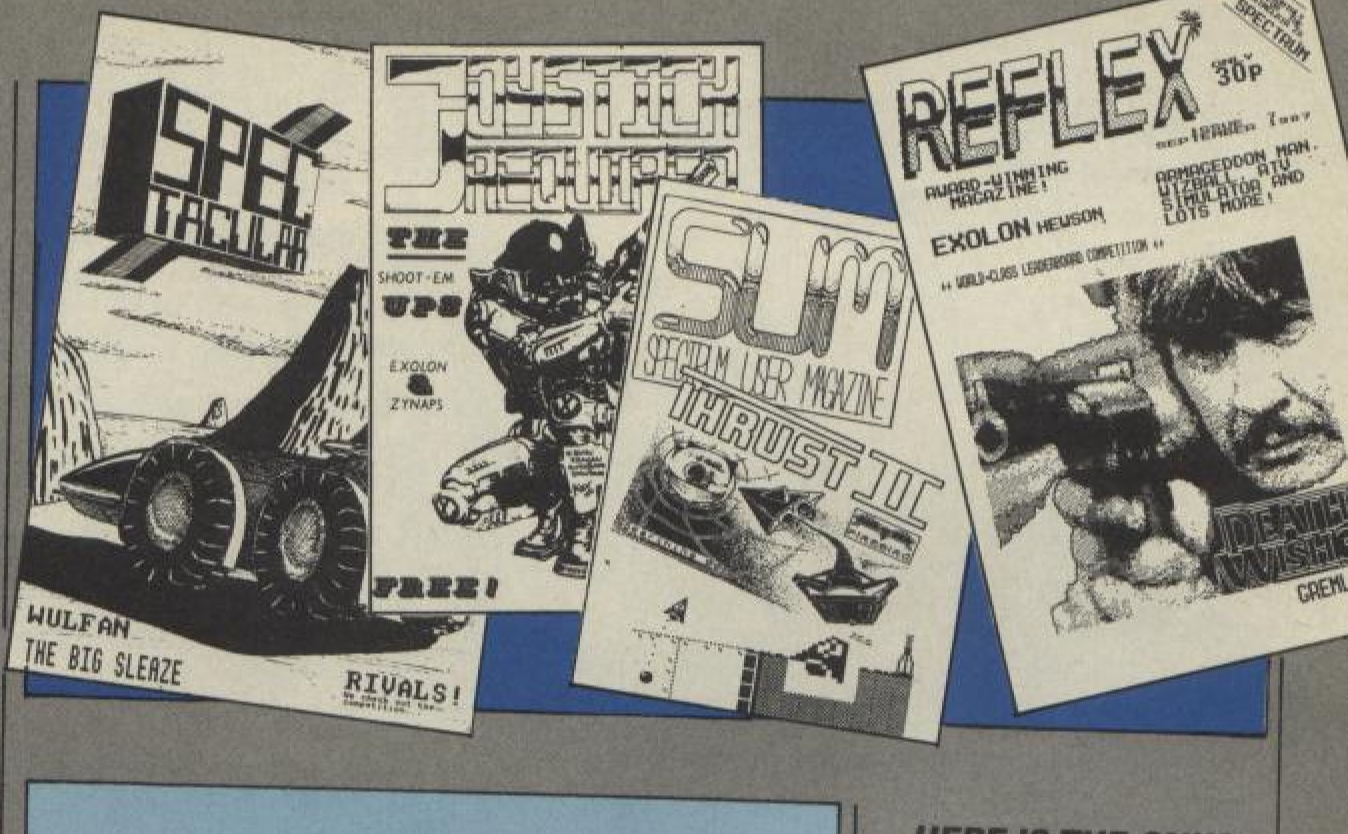
And it does the same when fielding criticisms of KJC Games's PBM game *It's A Crime!* – the violence-in-PBM issue is just part of a very long and detailed examination of a popular game.

Larger type and/or better photocopying would make the A5 *REM/RAM* a winner; the editors, Gary Doyle and Jonathan Welch respectively, have wisely avoided screen shots and screen dumps. After all, there's no point having them without excellent duplication.

The fanzines continue their separate ways after the merged issue.

From two three-letter titles to another . . . ***SUM***, or ***Spectrum User Magazine***, is produced at King Edward VI Five Ways School in Birmingham and competently run by Editor Mark Newman. He's managed to obtain sponsorship from Evesham Micros, the independent radio station BRMB and the central Birmingham branch of WH Smith, *and* he's sent us two successive issues, which helps flesh out the Fanzine File! (And, editors, it helps us form a real opinion . . .)

The fourth *SUM* is out now. It's a low-key A5 affair, aimed at the Birmingham area (and largely at Mark Newman's school), with a few cleanly-reproduced screen dumps but not much detail to the writing. Too many fanzines rely too closely on inlay-type descriptions of games without really reviewing them – though mind you some 'real' magazines could be accused of that too . . .



IN PRAISE OF LONGER TITLES

After *SUM* and *REM/RAM* you can probably expect *FOR* and *LET* and *VAL*; indeed, *SUM* even promises *ZUM* for Z88 owners! But there are times when we need long names like *International Herald Tribune*, so let's move on to **Compute** (it'll do), an A4 title for the Spectrum and BBC Micro.

Fanzine File has the sixth issue, dated August 1987; *Compute* appears every other month, so it's well past its first anniversary now.

This ish is highlighted by a good report on Acorn's new Archimedes range, and apparently *Compute* usually carries POKEs and general features; but Issue 6 is otherwise devoted to the pretty thorough reviews. The percentages are a bit extreme, though – they're mostly in the 80s and 90s apart from a single 24%! (That was for a BBC game, so who cares . . .)

Unfortunately *Compute* is almost illegible. It's all in a condensed (ie squashed up as opposed to normal or expanded) typeface from Clares's *Fontwise +* and there's virtually no space between letters. The lower-case l, for instance, is lost when it's next to l, m, n or any other letter beginning with a vertical stroke. Also, the headlines aren't nearly big enough to show where an article is starting.

Compute is worth reading, if you can.

HOT AYR

The Spectrum-specific ***Reflex***, which sent a seventh issue dated September 1987, is produced in the same Scottish town as Sir Clive Sinclair's Z88 desktop computers: Irvine, in Ayrshire. So it's got a well-written, well-researched news piece on the Z88, and the reviews are decent too, if rather rambling. Two-page (A4) adventure and tips sections complete the traditional fanzine content.

The resolution of *Reflex*'s printer is very poor, and it would be better typed (not to mention stapled . . .); but it's a worthwhile, fairly well-established monthly (once a fanzine's passed the hurdle of the first few months it's likely to go on publishing – that's how the editors are separated from the boys) with some local advertising. Could some more Scottish fanzines cross the border to Ludlow?



AS FEATURED IN CRASH

From Bristol comes another A4, ***Spectacular***, which sent in its 11th issue at the beginning of August! (It was featured in CRASH as long ago as Issue 38.) Just crying out for an 'It is – are you?' *Independent*-style ad campaign, *Spectacular* has some imaginative touches – Issue 11, for instance, features its own fanzine (and magazine) file entitled Rivals. The fanzines do seem to live in the shadow of the commercial magazines, reporting on our reports and cutting out our pictures, so it's good to see a fanzine taking note of its own kind as well.

There's also the standard adventure/tips/news material, substantial listings – and a *Spectacular* Publicity Pack that's better-written than the fanzine itself!

Spectacular, Spectrum-specific (tongue-twister . . .), is produced on an Amstrad CPC464 using *Tasword* and printed, with screen dumps coming through a Multiface 128, on an Alphacom 32. Editors J Davies and N Pryce hope to acquire an Atari ST and Mirrorsoft's *Fleet Street Editor* for supersemiprofessionalism, but 'until then', they say, 'we'll stick with 8-bit technology'. It's a plain and straightforward look – and I won't comment on Issue 11's photocopying, because the editors insist it's a one-off aberration.

HERE IS THE GNUS

Finally, two new fanzines with similar titles. ***The Spectrum Keyboard Basher***, of which only the first (June/July) issue has arrived from Ipswich (are there others?) is devoted to reviews, descriptive but sometimes too jokey. The 50p cover price may put some off, though it shouldn't be too much for a fanzine, and the collage-style typography of the headlines is eye-strainingly unreadable! Still, there are some striking computer-produced graphics and a sense of humour that could be effective if tightly controlled.

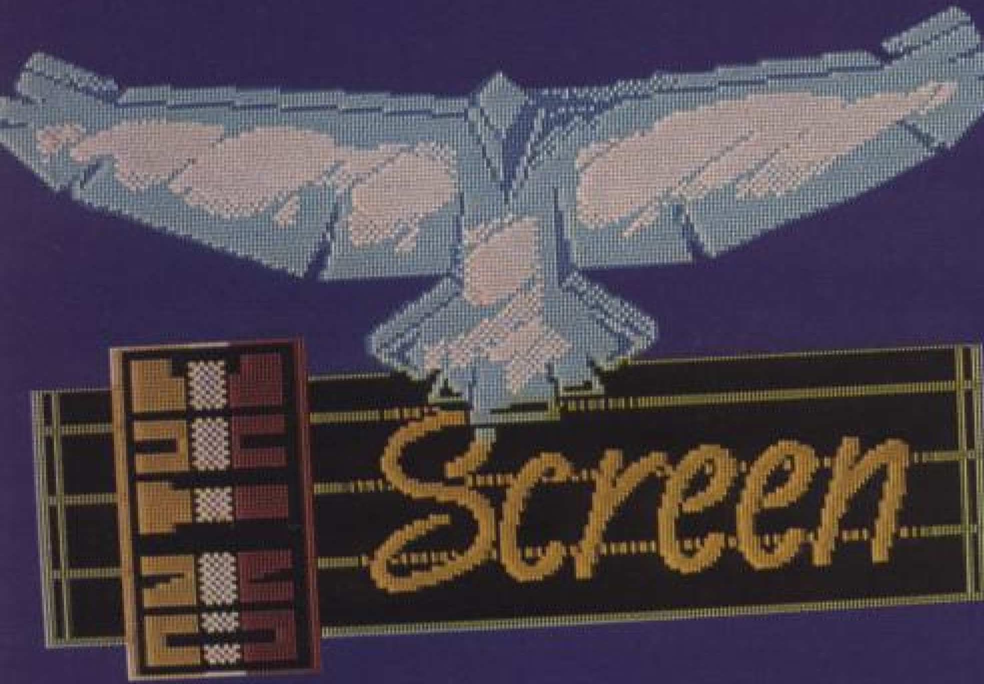
Finally finally, ***Joystick Required*** is a tiny (ten-page A5) rival to THE GAMES MACHINE, produced by Ian Hoser and Alex somebody in Guildford, Surrey. It covers the Spectrum and Atari ST, an odd combination no doubt explained by pocket-money economics. Again, the humour gets in the way of the real subject – but it's free (so far)! Just send an SAE every month.

HI, MOM, IF YOU'RE WATCHING

Thanks to all the editors and publishers who dropped in to the CRASH stand at The *PCW* Show, and thanks of course to everyone who sends in zines. They'll all get in Fanzine File eventually; just let us know that you haven't ceased publication, or that you have.

The next Fanzine File will be one with a difference: in Issue 48, CRASH presents its very own fanzine, produced by Mike Dunn and Robin Candy without benefit of Apricots, CRTronic typesetters, process cameras or Oli Frey. With it they'll write a kind of DIY guide for new fanzine editors, drawing from their harrowing experiences in zine-production – so they'd be interested to hear from any fanzine editors with practical advice on how to/not to go about it. Write a letter.

The Bug: *Bug Subs, 28 Leaside Avenue, Muswell Hill, London N10 3BU.* 45p cover price, subscriptions 50p per issue for five or more issues.
Entertainment Micro User: *Donnini House, Comet Hill, Peterlee, Easington, Durgam SR8 3ER.* It was 45p in April . . .
Joystick Required: Ian Hoser, *41 Abbotswood, Guildford, Surrey GU1 1UZ.* Free – just send an SAE – but donations welcomed!
Microchip: *37 Park Place, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 2RE.* 30p.
Plus: *29 Frimley Green Road, Frimley, Camberley, Surrey GU16 5AL.* 30p.
RAM: Jonathan Welch, *Principal's House, Kerrison School, Thorndon, near Eye, Suffolk IP23 7JG.* 35p for joint issue with *REM.*
Reflex: Spectre Publications, *21 Berry Drive, Irvine, Ayrshire KA12 0LJ.* Single copies 30p, six issues for £3.50, 12 issues for £6.00.
REM: Gary Doyle, *The Little Manor, Thorndon, near Eye, Suffolk IP23 7JJ.* 35p for joint issue with *RAM.*
Spectacular: *28 Claremont Road, Bishopston, Bristol BS7 8DH.* Single copies 50p and an SAE, six issues for £4.00.
The Spectrum Keyboard Basher: *'Langdale', 35 Bucklesham Road, Kirton, Ipswich IP10 0PD.* Single copies 50p and an SAE, six issues for £4.00.
Spectrum User Magazine: *King Edward Five Ways School, Scotland Lane, Birmingham B32 4BT.* No cover price.
Compute: it's 20p, but came without an address. Could the editors please . . . ?



EAST MEETS WEST

Finally recovered from the shock of seeing the Art of Noise's new album get a mere two stars in a certain music magazine and the additional shock of a new On The Screen logo, MIKE 'not really very skippy and far from being in the least bit mouse-like but still unbelievably cool' DUNN gets down to the hip 'n' trendy beat of this month's On The Screen, the section about everything except Spectrum screen dumps . . .

HOTEI

Well, at least Alistair Garratt's picture of Hotei, a philosopher and a pagoda allowed me to prove that my intelligence is vastly superior to that of our Managing Ed. Everyone knows this cool character Hotei is the Japanese god of wealth, and if Nintendo sales are anything to go by he's a very busy chap. Alistair hails from Finchfield in the West Midlands.



COUNTRYSIDE VIEW

'Isn't that nice!' says Nick Roberts, the man of Playing Tips fame, as he looks at *Countryside View*. 'A lot better than all those horrible Judge Dredds and all those other nasty violent screens,' he adds grumpily.

Nice Idyllic Countryside Pictures Which Bring Solace Into The Harsh And Violent Life Of A Poor Overworked And Underpaid Reviewer (who could he mean? – Concerned Reader) are brought to you by Alan McNamara of Oldham, Lancashire. Note the excellent use of colour.



JAPS

Just to spite Nick, here's a birrov 'ard fightin', also from Alan McNamara of Oldham. Just goes to show you can't trust anyone . . . the image takes me back to the days when I read *Eagle* and *Commando*.



MOTÖRHEAD

This one comes all the way from Tomar in Portugal, from a couple of guys called Miguel Traquina and Rui Antunes. I'm not too keen on heavy metal . . . but I'll admit the monochromatic screen is very neat, with great finesse and attention to detail. It'd be a perfectly good album cover! The Motörhead picture is actually made up of two separate screens, and the effect works surprisingly well.



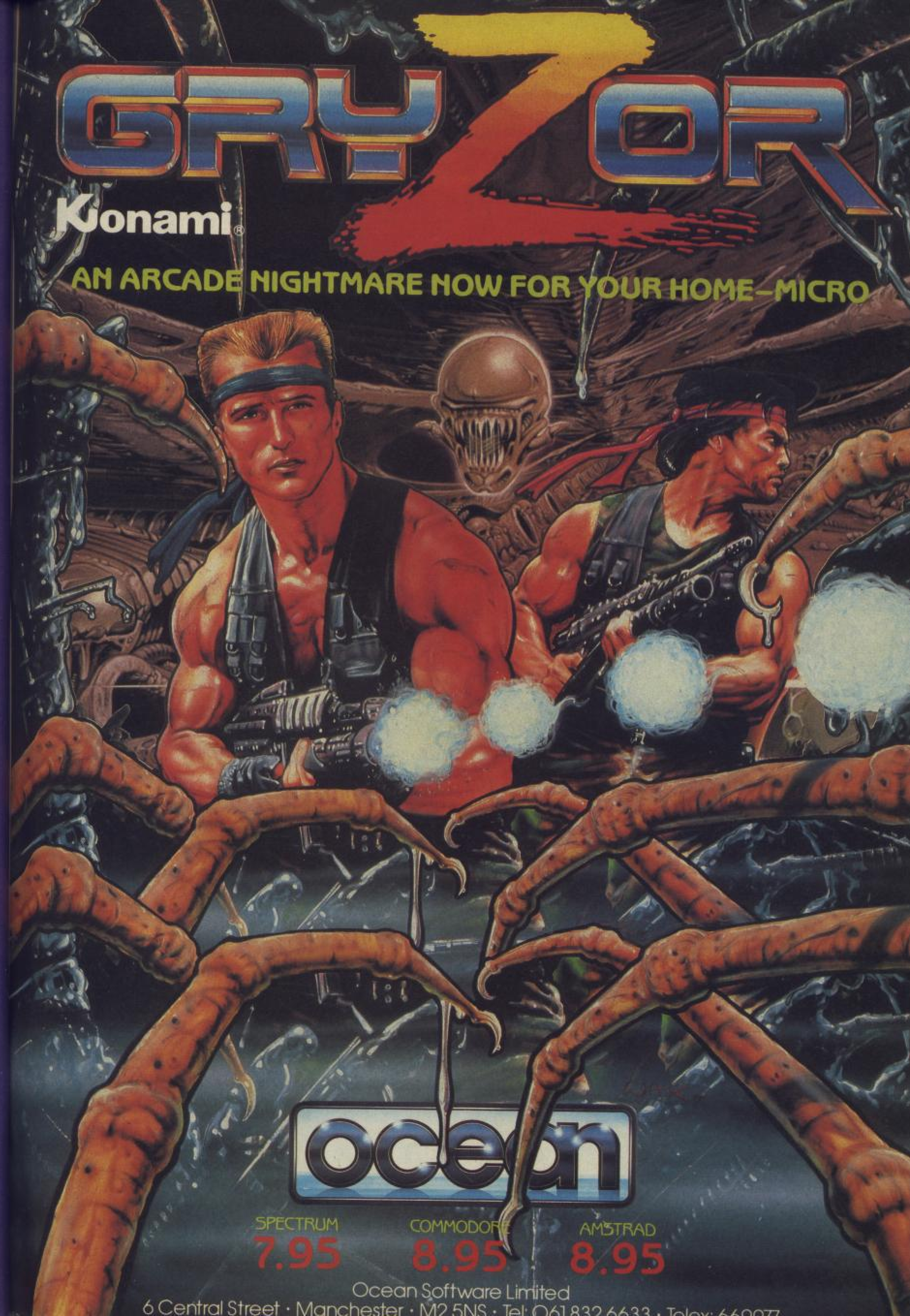
Wow! It's getting dark early now, isn't it? I mean, it's 11.30 and the street lights are on in Ludlow's main (and only) street. I've just finished another On The Screen all on my own, though next month Paul Sumner will be collaborating. I wonder if I might be allowed to go home now?

YOU can't, of course – first you have to send your screens to On The Screen, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*. If you can fit all that on your Jiffy bag, then congrats to you. If you can fit in an SAE too, you'll get your tape back.

Remember: if your entry is printed you get a full-colour framed and mounted screen dump courtesy of Rainbird, the bird behind *The Advanced OCP Art Studio*.

If you've already had your screen printed and you haven't had it Rainbirdised, don't despair. Thousands share your problem, and Rainbird's Clare Edgeley is on the case.

Till nex' mumf: chill out!


GRYZOR
Konami
AN ARCADE NIGHTMARE NOW FOR YOUR HOME-MICRO
ocean
SPECTRUM
7.95
COMMODORE
8.95
AMSTRAD
8.95
Ocean Software Limited
6 Central Street · Manchester · M2 5NS · Tel: 061 832 6633

GO ON THE RAMPAGE WITH ACTIVISION

ACTIVISION
ENTERTAINMENT SOFTWARE

Crash Competition



MONSTER MANIA is about to come to your Spectrum when Activision goes ape over *Rampage* – its latest arcade conversion. *Rampage* is the corky coin-op featuring a large gorilla (who bears a striking resemblance to King Kong) and a horde of marauding monsters bashing their way through cities, knocking down skyscrapers and killing off billions of soldiers.

Rampage is set for release near Christmas, and there's a preview of it in this month's CRASH, but if you want to be one of the first to play it then answer the questions below and you could win the **first prize**: a complete, and very hairy, gorilla suit to scare granny with.

Second prize is a gorilla head, hands and feet to scare grandad with; **third prize** is a gorilla head and hands to scare mummy with; **fourth prize** is a gorilla head to scare little sis with; and **fifth prize** is a rubber gorilla mask to scare the hamster with. And, of course, all the winners get a Spectrum copy of *Rampage* and an endless fold-out poster thrown in as well!

1 Which company produces the arcade game Rampage?
a) Bally/Midway
b) Sega
c) Nintendo

2 Who played the girl who fell in love with King Kong in the 1933 film?
a) Zsa Zsa Gabor
b) Fay Wray
c) Danny La Rue

3 Besides the gorilla, what are the other two monsters in Rampage?
a) Godzilla and a wolfman
b) An ogre and Godzilla
c) A huge goblin and a wolfman

4 When captured in the 1933 film King Kong, **was Kong taken to . . .**
a) a zoo?
b) a circus?
c) a theatre?

5 How many players maximum can play the coin-op version of Rampage?
a) two
b) three
c) four

APE ABOUT IN MONKEY GEAR AND THEN BIFF DOWN THE BUILDINGS!!

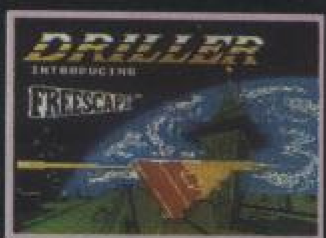
25 **runners-up** will each receive copies of the game and the poster. So, your starter for ten is . . .

When you think you've got all the answers right send them in on the back of a banana, er, postcard or sealed envelope along with your name and address to: **RAMPANT RAMPAGING MONSTERS COMP, CRASH, *PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB*** to arrive no later than November 25. The winners will be drawn from the correct entries randomly and the decision of CRASH's judges in all respects is final, unless they are picked up and thrown against the wall by a gargantuan monkey.

WIN A GORILLA SUIT AND COPIES OF RAMPAGE!









SOLID
3 DIMENSIONAL GRAPHICS

SPECTRUM
COMMODORE
AMSTRAD CPC
Cassette £14.95
Disc £17.95

Mitral – An abandoned Moon – An unstable Moon about to blow – A defence system set on automatic – Lasers that don't miss – Scanners that hunt you out. *Mitral is MASSIVE . . .*

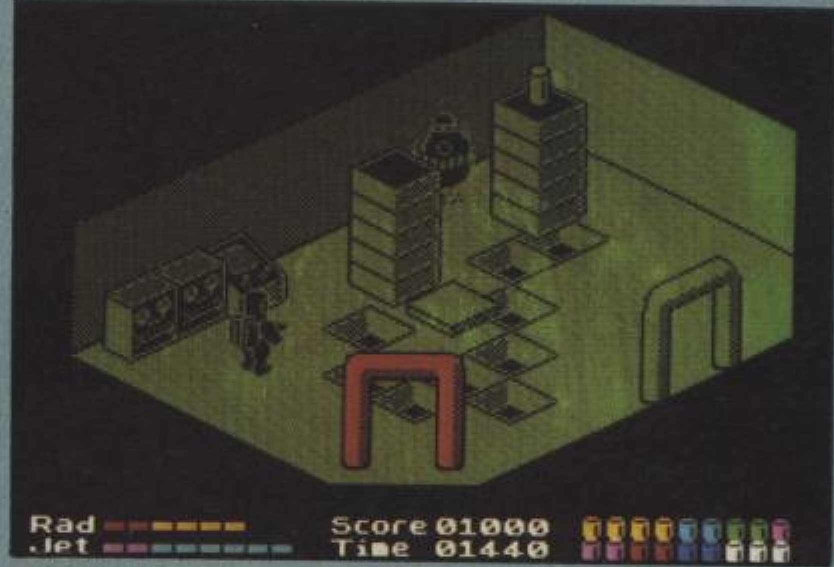
"The 3D presentation is Spectacular" *SINCLAIR USER.* ***"A Major Breakthrough"*** *AMSTRAD USER.*
"A New 3 Dimensional Reality . . . WOW!" *CRASH.*

THE DRILLER EXPERIENCE – IT'S JUST LIKE BEING THERE!

incentive SOFTWARE LTD 2 MINERVA HOUSE, CALLEVA PARK, ALDERMASTON, BERKSHIRE RG7 4QW (07356) 77288

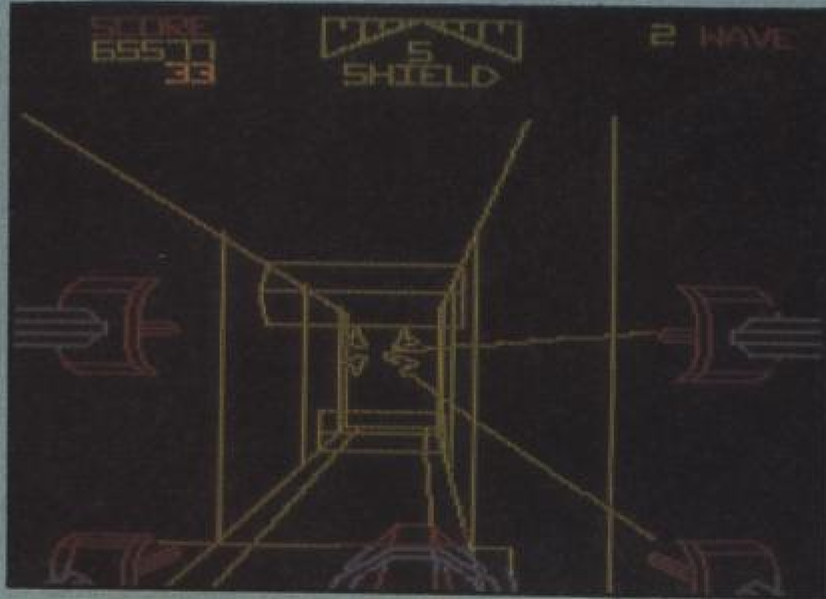
MERELY MANGRAM – PREVIEW

Coming soon to a Spectrum near you!



▶ Thermonuclear pranks in Elite's *Chain Reaction*

▶ Domark's *Star Wars* – a real star strike for your Spectrum





▶ Decisions in the courtyard corridor of Activision's *Knightmare*

THEY SAY it can be like a bad electric dream working for **Activision**, and perhaps that's why Activision is launching a ***Knightmare*** game licensed from the eponymous TV show.

Knightmare, the show produced by Anglia TV, is on the ITV network every Monday and is the first fantasy adventure game to hit the screens. It's about a young adventurer making his way through a strange world full of riddles and puzzles – and with luck they'll all be successfully translated to the Spectrum.

On the computer screen, *Knightmare* will be presented as a book with pages flicking as the player moves from location to location. Hoping to make big sales at Christmas, Activision is releasing *Knightmare* in November at the fantasy price of £9.99.

The screen connection continues with Domark **set to reveal its first coin-op conversion – *Star Wars***, which has been floating around the arcades for four years and finally makes it to your small screens in November.

All three sections are included: the battle with the Empire Fighters to the Deathstar, the flight down the tunnels and the overland battle with the towers. There should also be some speech in *Star Wars*, and Domark is promising computer versions of *The Empire Strikes Back* and *Return Of The Jedi* in 1988.

There was plenty of snaffling at The *PCW* Show, (*snaff-ling, v., to snatch product or programmers from other companies*). Not five minutes after Firebird had snaffled some of Hewson's programmers – along with the *Uridium* follow-up *Morpheus* – Elite **went and snaffled both Durell's new games:** *Chain Reaction* **and** *Spitfire*. **Elite doesn't know when or how it's going to release them but there are some screen shots here.**

***Chain Reaction* is set in a nuclear power station where anti-nuclear activists have reprogrammed the station's robots to empty the containment vault and attack all human staff! Now there are 18 canisters of dangerous fuel rods scattered through the seven-storey station. You have 30 minutes to save the world . . .**

***Spitfire* is similar to Durell's *Thanatos*, the dragon game of last Christmas, with large well-animated plane graphics shooting up other planes and the landscape. More details when we get them.**

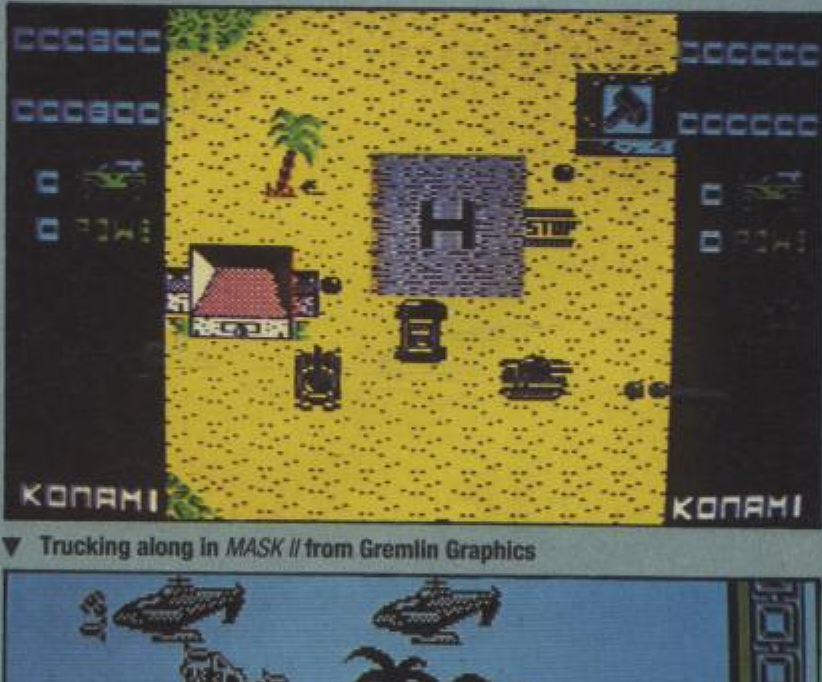
Jackal is **Konami**'s new conversion from its own arcade machine. It's a kind of *Ikari Warriors* in tanks, where either one or two players trundle over different types of terrain rescuing prisoners. It should be out by Christmas.

On to ***Gremlin Graphics***, which has a mountain of releases piling up for the next few months. The first four to appear should be *MASK II*, *Compendium*, *Deflektor* and *Tour De Force*.

MASK II, coming hot on the tyres of *MASK I* (which got 81% Overall last issue), features four separate adventures within the one game. The action is divided into two main challenges. First, you select the right team of three agents to continue the missions, each with his own specialised vehicle; then come the four missions, covering oodles of locations.

On a less serious note, Gremlin also has ***Compendium***, starring the Wink family headed up by Tiddly, the father. It's a selection of classic board games with novel twists – 'snakes and hazzards', with animated snakes, ludo, bingo (though I can't see anything funny

▼ Tank you very much: Konami's *Jackal*



▼ Trucking along in *MASK II* from Gremlin Graphics





▶ The fatty Agent X hovers above a moon station in Mastertronic's *Agent X II*



▶ It's the revenge of the mutant planning officers in Hewson's *Nebulus*

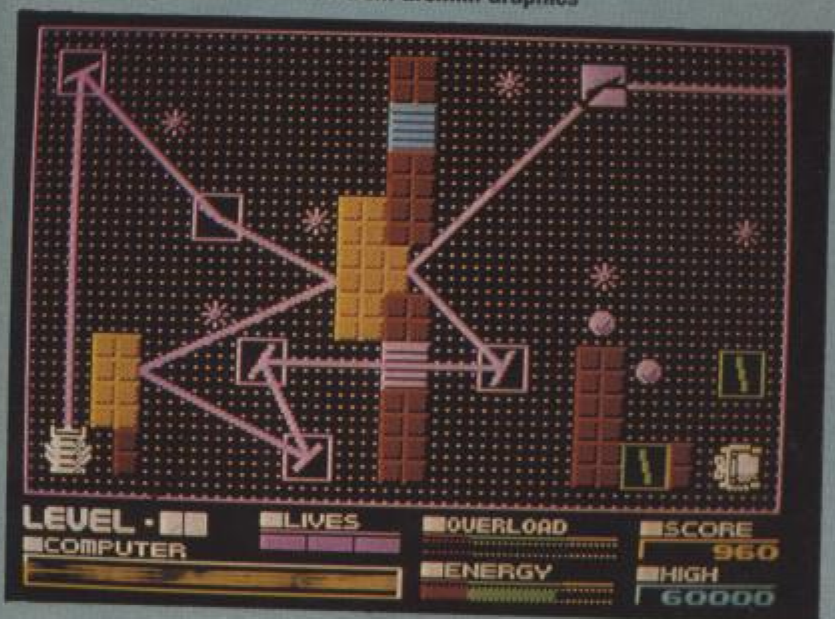
about those two) and an old pub game, catch-the-flying-beer-glass.

But if you want to use a bit of the old grey matter there's always ***Deflektor***, where the idea is to deflect beams of light by mirrors and send it through lenses to reach the home receiver . . . really it's a bit difficult to explain without playing the game, and because I haven't I can't.

Amid all the racing games like *Supersprint, Grand Prix Simulator* and *ATV Simulator*, Gremlin has decided to go with the more sedate sport of cycling in ***Tour De Force***. The race takes you through five countries each with a different backdrop and terrain to watch – the objective is to win each leg (after all, we can't have legless cyclists) of the race and thus continue to the next country.

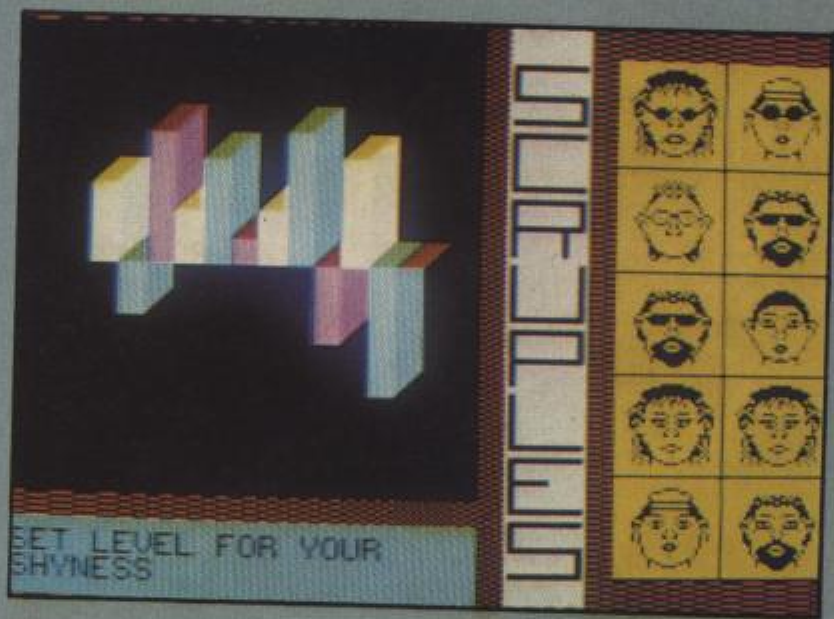
It's not going to be all plain sailing, though *(well, of course not, you're on cycles - Ed Dir)* – in case you don't get kicked off by the other racers there are potholes, broken bottles and bales of hay littering the course. Oh, and my heartfelt apologies for calling it *Tour De Farce* a month or two back . . .

▶ Making light work: *Deflektor* from Gremlin Graphics



▶ Your lips are like petals – bicycle pedals: *Tour De Force* from Gremlin Graphics





▶ Yes, it's *Scruples* from Virgin Games. No, it's not. It depends.

Hewson's *Impossaball* programmer John Phillips is back with a novel little offering called ***Nebulus***. The eponymous Nebulus is a planet where strange towers have been built without planning permission, and your task is to knock 'em down, using the precarious ledges to climb to the tops of the circular towers and there setting off the destruct mechanisms. Hewson says 'it's got 3- rotational scrolling, with precise hidden-surface removal running at 25 frames per second!' Which, roughly translated, means it's jolly good indeed.

Question: you visit another Spectrum magazine and see them reviewing an unfinished game. Do you ring CRASH and tell us? Yes? No? Depends? Well, if you've got scruples you do! And that's exactly what **Virgin Games** has got: ***Scruples***, licensed from the popular board game. *Scruples* shows up your worst, or best, traits, exposing them to all your chums. Review soon? Yes? No . . . ?

From ethics to evil, let's go to news of ***Agent X II***, **Mastertronic**'s follow-up to *Agent X* (Overall 85% in Issue 37). Our eponymous hero goes into orbit to find and defeat the evil Professor who's about to unleash his zit-ray.

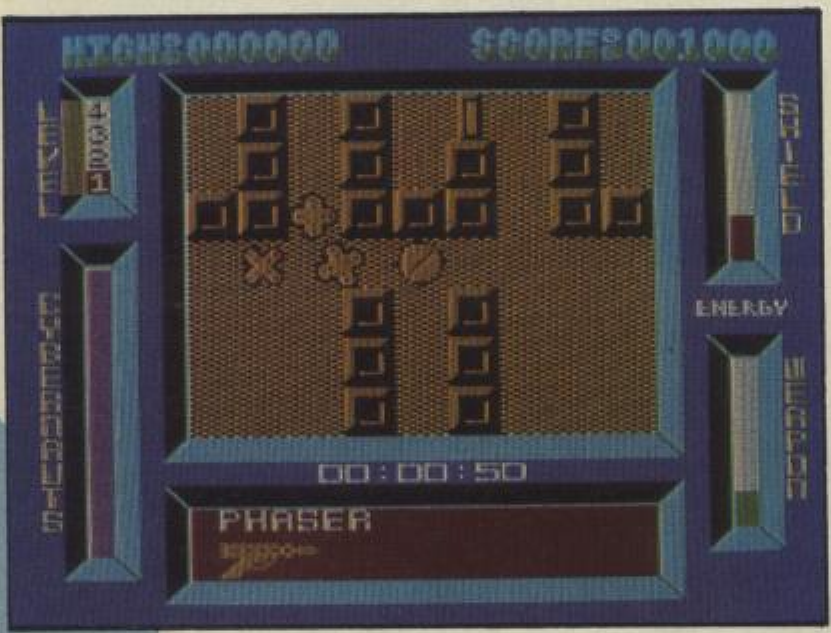
The ray, logically enough, makes everyone break out in terminal acne – so they all rush off to spend their entire life's savings on skin cream and within a couple of days bang goes the economy. And even if the economy doesn't collapse the evil professor will suddenly become fabulously wealthy because he's bought up all the zit-cream manufacturers. But this bounder must be stopped and quick!

So Agent X is off, entering the mad Prof's secret stronghold beneath the surface of the moon.

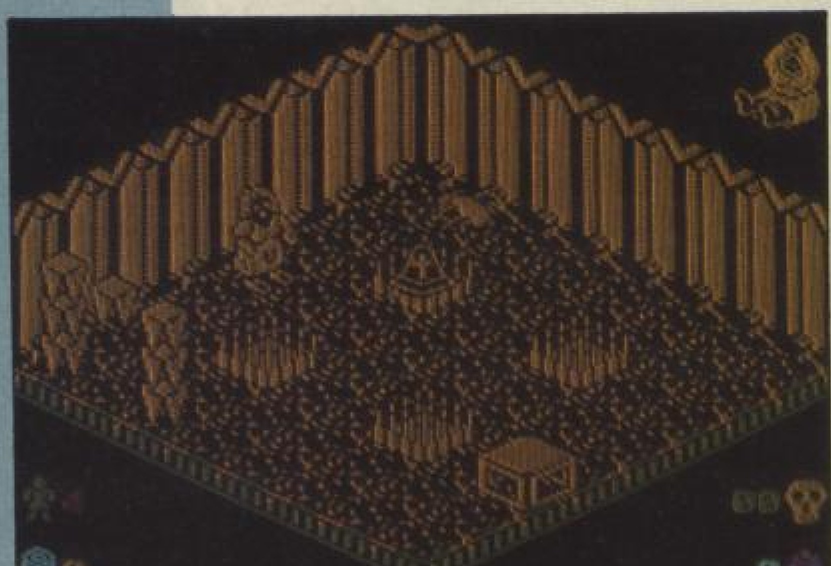
Three more from Mastertronic: ***Laserwheel***, a bizarre shoot-'em-up; ***Level Five***, another maze-type shoot-'em-up featuring squirming amoebas; and ***Rentakill Rita*** – an isometric arcade adventure starring the pottiest cleaner who deals with vermin by jumping on them.

From what I've seen of the preview version, *Rentakill Rita* looks very promising, as does the prospect of having it finished just in time for next issue. And so am I – finished till next issue, that is. ▶

▶ Level One of *Level Five*! What's this from Mastertronic?!



▶ Things that go psssssssst! in the night: Mastertronic's *Rentakill Rita*

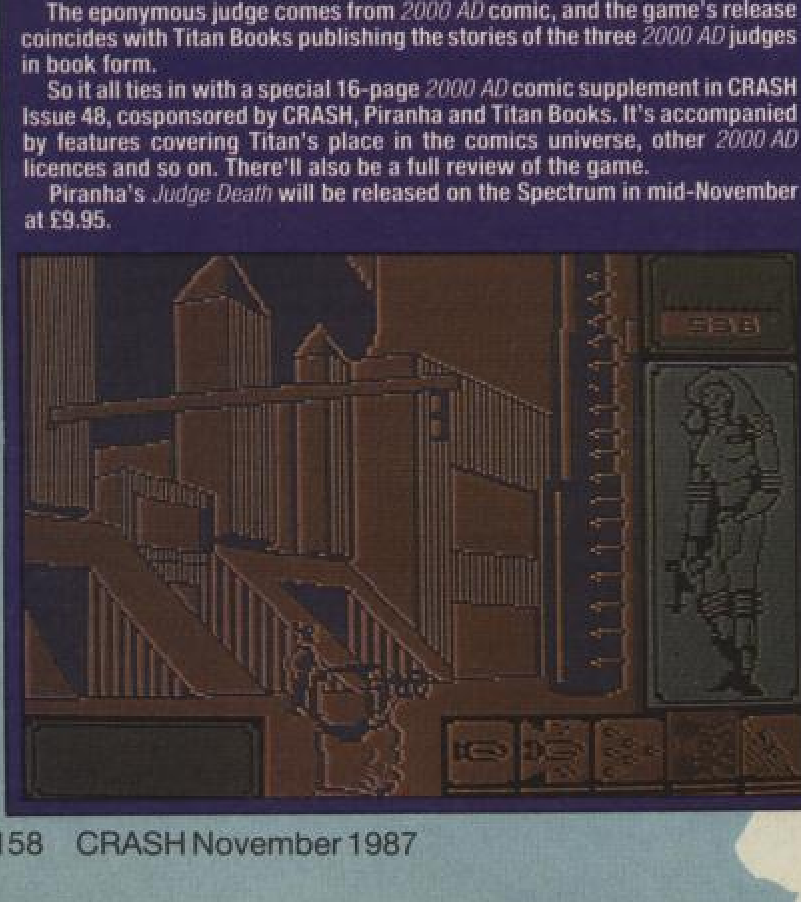


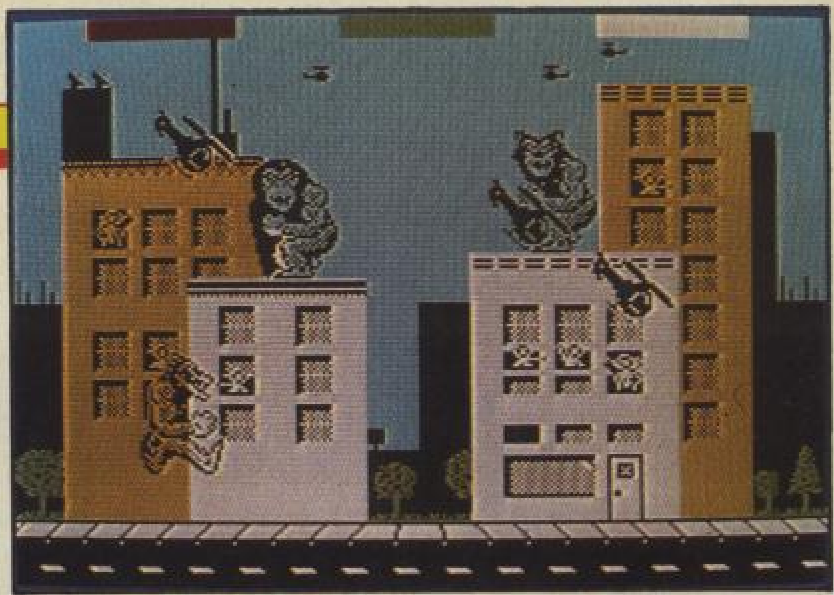
Coming sssssssooon: here's a taste of Piranha's *Judge Death*, a shoot-'em-up adventure which will make a splash in CRASH.

The eponymous judge comes from *2000 AD* comic, and the game's release coincides with Titan Books publishing the stories of the three *2000 AD* judges in book form.

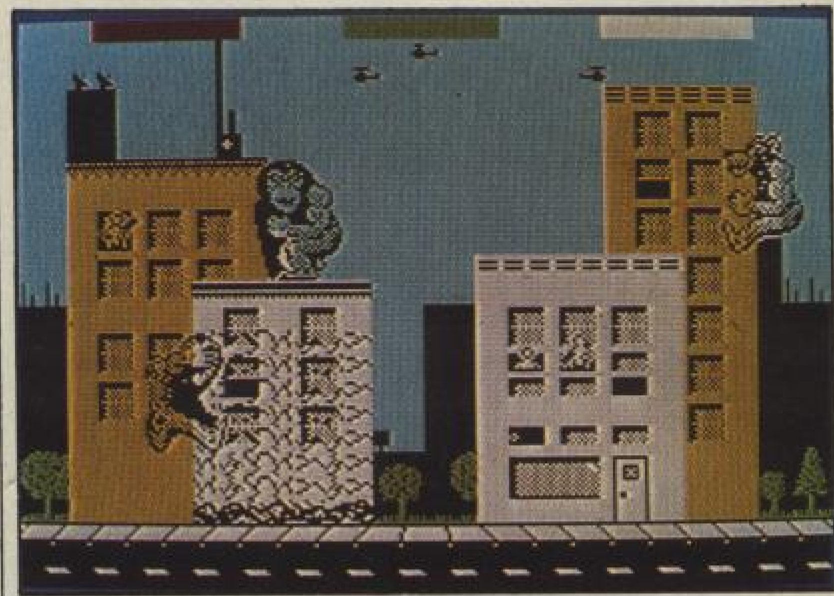
So it all ties in with a special 16-page *2000 AD* comic supplement in CRASH Issue 48, cosponsored by CRASH, Piranha and Titan Books. It's accompanied by features covering Titan's place in the comics universe, other *2000 AD* licences and so on. There'll also be a full review of the game.

Piranha's *Judge Death* will be released on the Spectrum in mid-November at £9.95.





▶ See no evil?: *Rampage*



▶ Walls come a-tumblin' down in Activision's *Rampage*

MONSTERS COME OUT OF THE CLOSET

Rampage

Activision £9.99 November

Picture this . . . There are these three monsters, probably elated to King Kong, Godzilla and the rest of the screen ensemble, having a real beano, stomping from city to city gratuitously knocking down skyscrapers and killing soldiers. The game is Rampage, Bally/Midway's coin-op soon to be released on the Spectrum by Activision.

(If you read your CRASH from front to back you will have seen the Rampage comp on page 154, and maybe even the cover.)

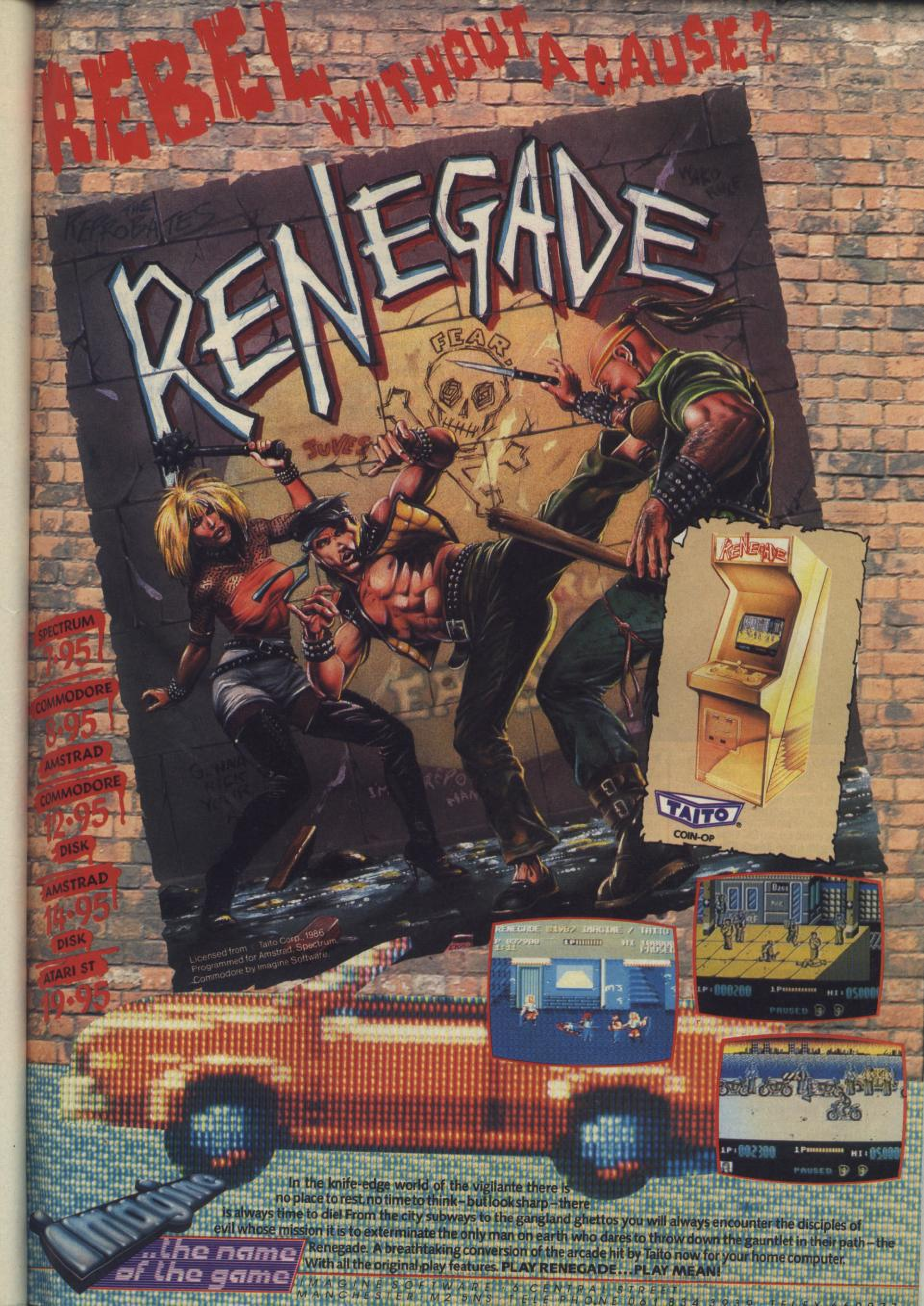
But they're no ordinary monsters, of course – Activision never deals with ordinary monsters. No, these are special monsters, or rather people who were turned into monsters: there's George the gorilla, Lizzie the Godzilla-type creature and Ralph the 30-foot-high wolfman.

Tracking them down is a bunch of mean soldiers – but that's no problem as the monsters can swash or eat them (depending on how succulent they look, I suppose).

Activision hopes that all the features of the coin-op will be in the Spectrum version, though the programmers may have some trouble squeezing in all 128 levels. As I write they're up to 16 backdrops and 32 foregrounds.

But even on the Spectrum there's room for three players – one on keys, one on cursors and one on a Kempston joystick.

Any objectives in the game? No, it's just sheer physical, meaningless violence. And that's what the CRASH reviewers like to hear . . .



REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE?
RENEGADE
FEAR
SPECTRUM
7·95
COMMODORE
8·95
AMSTRAD
COMMODORE
12·95
DISK
AMSTRAD
14·95
DISK
ATARI ST
19·95
TAITO
COIN-OP
Licensed from Taito Corp., 1986
Programmed for Amstrad, Spectrum,
Commodore by Imagine Software.
Imagine
... the name of the game
In the knife-edge world of the vigilante there is no place to rest, no time to think – but look sharp – there is always time to die! From the city subways to the gangland ghettos you will always encounter the disciples of evil whose mission it is to exterminate the only man on earth who dares to throw down the gauntlet in their path – the Renegade. A breathtaking conversion of the arcade hit by Taito now for your home computer. With all the original play features. PLAY RENEGADE... PLAY MEAN!
IMAGINE SOFTWARE · 6 CENTRAL STREET
MANCHESTER M2 5NS TELEPHONE 061 834 3939

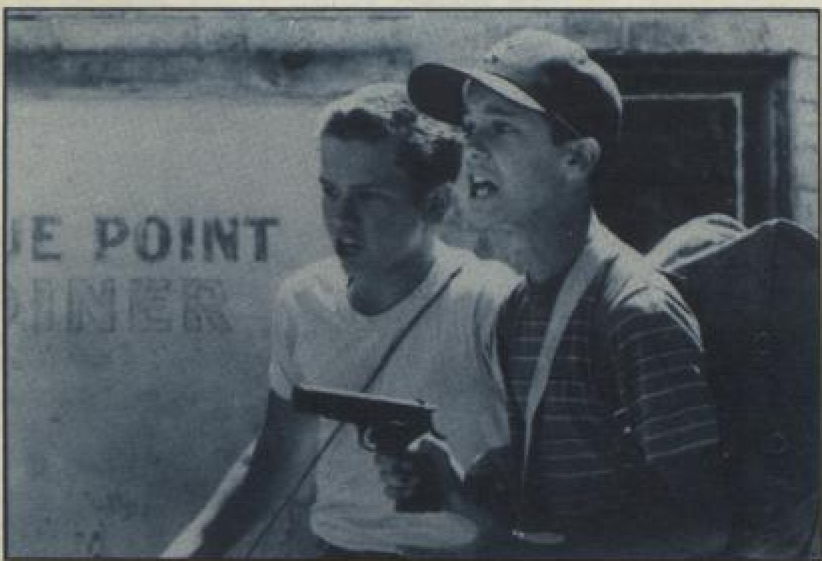
ET AL

GOGGLE!

COMING SOON TO A SCREEN NEAR YOU . . .

They're back – the CRASH video reviews. And by popular request we'll be trying to review more of the latest films on your hire shop's shelves. Just to make sure they *are* on the shelves, we went down to our local video shop, Goffs in Ludlow, to hire them!

Now, on with the show . . . and don't forget to tell us what you think. Write to Dominic Handy, the videos editor, at CRASH.



► *Stand By Me*: **now you can sit in front of it**

IF ANYBODY out there hates **Eddie Murphy** they'd better book a place on the next shuttle off the planet. From now till Christmas you just won't be able to ignore the wisecracking young American – on the big screen is the hilarious *Beverly Hills Cop II* with Murphy as Axel Foley, the holidaying Detroit cop, and **CIC Video** is rereleasing the original ***Beverly Hills Cop*** at £9.99. Also available from CIC at the tenner price is ***Star Trek – The Motion Picture***.

Continuing his assault on the British public, on November 6 Murphy drops onto video shelves around the country in ***The Golden Child***, also starring Charlotte Lewis (*Pirates*). Watch out for some astounding special effects.

CBS/Fox has some exciting rereleases, from John Huston's classic 1951 romantic adventure ***The African Queen*** (with Humphrey Bogart and Katharine Hepburn) up to present-day comedies such as ***The Cannonball Run*** and way into the future with ***Star Wars***.

Guild Home Video rounds off October with two interesting titles. ***Duet For One*** stars everyone's favourite, Julie Andrews, as a brilliant virtuoso concert violinist who is suddenly struck down by multiple sclerosis, a disease which impairs coordination and makes it impossible for her to play.

Guild's ***Nowhere To Hide*** sees tough guy Michael Ironside (*Top Gun, Scanners*) star alongside Amy Madigan (*Twice In A Lifetime*) in a fast-moving mystery thriller set in the US Marine Corps.

Films about World War II are continually coming out in dribs and drabs, and Medusa Home Video bases its latest release on one of Sven Hassel's most impressive books, ***Wheels Of Terror***. It stars those veterans Oliver Reed and David Carradine.

13 may prove to be a lucky number for **RCA/Columbia** in November – that's the day the highly-acclaimed ***Best Shot*** is released. Gene Hackman (*Superman, The French Connection, Target*) stars in this true story about the trials and tribulations of a school basketball team taken over by a top college coach. A celebrity *Best Shot* Basketball Challenge arranged by RCA/Columbia raised money for charity in mid-October.

RCA/Columbia also has the hugely successful ***Stand By Me***, a rather sentimental tale of growing up in America, on rental. And its £14.99 for-sale release of ***Ghostbusters*** is matched by the cartoon series ***The Real Ghostbusters*** – ten volumes, at £9.99 each.

Steven Spielberg (*Close Encounters, E.T., Gremlins*, everything) is back on **CIC Video** – as writer of ***Amazing Stories***, the latest in compilation videos. The three films are a fantastic mixture of 'wonderment, fantasy, irony and comedy' (or so this 'ere press release says). They're all out on a single tape on November 20.

Also look out for CIC's ***Deadly Care***, where Cheryl Ladd (TV's *Charlie's Angels*) stars in the true story of a nurse who can't cope with the pressure of an intensive-care unit and reaches for the drug cabinet.

It's around this time of the year the video industry gets together for a massive nosh-up and the **British Video Awards**. Winners this year include *Aliens* for the best film, *Back To The Future* for the most-rented and best family video (along with someone called Michael J Fox for best actor), and Meryl Streep for her role in *Out Of Africa*. *Mona Lisa* picked up an award for Best British Video.

FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF

CIC Video 15

WHEN Ferris Bueller (Matthew Broderick – *War Games, Ladyhawke*) takes a day off from school, he doesn't just stay at home watching MTV or spend a day at the local arcade. No, young Bueller regards skipping school as a full-time occupation.

But when the cutest boy in Chicago falls (supposedly) ill even the local police station wishes him well, he's so widely loved.

► **Jolly hooky sticks: Matthew Broderick (right) in** *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*



On this particular day Ferris decides he really *is* going to enjoy himself. So after he's dragged his misanthropic best friend Cameron (Alan Ruck) from his (real) sick bed and got his girlfriend Sloane (Mia Sara – *Legend*) off school, they all set off to downtown Chicago in Cameron's father's Ferrari and tour the sights of America's second-largest city.

On Ferris's trail are his jealous sister Jeanie and the menacing Ed Rooney, Dean of Students from the local school. As Ferris Bueller himself says, 'life moves pretty fast; if you don't stop and look around, you could miss it' *(a bit like CRASH - Man Ed)*.

Matthew Broderick plays Ferris as the most supersmooth, suave and sophisticated person you could ever hope to meet (or be if your name's Mike D). As in most teen pics the hero's bedroom contains everything any teenager could ever want, even the link to his school's computer (left over from *War Games*, no doubt!). Mia Sara and Alan Ruck make the ideal tag-along team, and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* is one of the quickest-moving and cleverest movies I've seen in ages. You just mustn't miss it.

DOMINIC HANDY 90%

Ferris Bueller has so much character, so much guts, so much audacity he can get away with anything; the way he plays to the camera is amusing, though I guess not original, and the script is well-written. Ferris Bueller's Day Off *is brilliant, truly funny, a classic – I'd rate it above everything else except* The Adventures Of Buckaroo Banzai Across the Eighth Dimension.

MIKE DUNN 93%

HOUSE II: THE SECOND STORY

Entertainment In Video 15

YOU'D THINK squeaky-clean American yuppies would know better than to inherit old mansions by now, there've been so many films hinting at the evil that lurks in unswept corners.

Jesse McLaughlin doesn't; played by Arye Gross (who starred in *Soul Man* earlier this year) in the tedious and silly *House II*, he falls in love with his family's ancestral New England pile and is soon beset by the usual run of poltergeists, holes in the fabric of time and avengers from beyond the grave.

Jesse, his girlfriend Kate (Lar Park Lincoln, who sounds like a car dealership) and mate Charlie (Jonathan Stark) disinter (decoffin) Jesse's great-great-grandfather Gramps (Royal Dano, who sounds like a biscuit or maybe an up-market bone china).

He was a Wild West outlaw and was buried with the magic skull of immortality which the ghost who killed Jesse's parents was looking for, you see – sad, but it happens all the time.

Gramps is a tiresomely sentimental old zombie who refuses to die again – that's one of the disadvantages of having undead characters, of course, you can't kill 'em off without a lot of lore and gore – and wanders around making cute time-warp comments à la *Back To The Future*.

The skull is stolen by a thing from the mists of time, which you might think is a blessing in disguise – end credits? – but Jesse and Charlie dash off into the mists of time to retrieve it. I wouldn't want to spoil the mists of time for you, so suffice it to say that bits are stolen from *Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom* (the temple set) and *Gremlins* (a load of primeval Muppets; *House 2* special-effects man Chris Walas also worked on the Spielberg film).

It's an odd mixture of bad comedy and worse horror schlock. And consider this implausibility: The skull gives its owner immortality. (It also glows in the dark; have magic skulls no subtlety these days?) So why was Gramps *buried* with it in the first place?

And since the nasties who want the skull are still alive in the 1980s despite having lived hundreds of years ago, they are obviously immortal *anyway*, so why do they need the skull?

Two good points: John Ratzenberger (Cliffie in *Cheers*) as an existential electrician ('Looks like you got some kind of alternate universe in there') and a witty use of sound, both as effects and as tongue-in-cheek music.

And let's not be too hard on Gramps. He hits the nail on the skull quite early on: 'There's something special about this old house – it doesn't know time or space. I would give it neither.

BARNABY PAGE 16%

If you're expecting a decent follow-up along the same lines as House *you'll be pretty disappointed.* House II *makes no pretence to being a serious eerie horror film, and taking any of it seriously it will ruin your enjoyment. But it's all just so unbelievable it is curiously humorous.*

John Ratzenberger and Jonathan Stark add life and wit to a plot that moves beyond the house much more than the first; the surroundings are dank and dreary but the film is lively and full of action.

DOMINIC HANDY 60%

WAR ZONE

Guild Home Video 15

FRESH from covering a fashion show in Paris, ABS TV reporter Don Stevens (Christopher Walken – *The Deer Hunter, At Close Range*) is dispatched to report on the fighting in war-torn Beirut. An early offer of an interview with top PLO leader Yassin finds Stevens the victim of deception: the man claiming to represent the PLO is an impostor.

Stevens doesn't take kindly to being made a fool of, and is determined to learn the truth. During his investigations he is manipulated and threatened by all factions, each of them trying to find the REAL Yassin. When Stevens does finally catch up with him, Yassin is ruthlessly gunned down in front of him . . . by PLO terrorists.

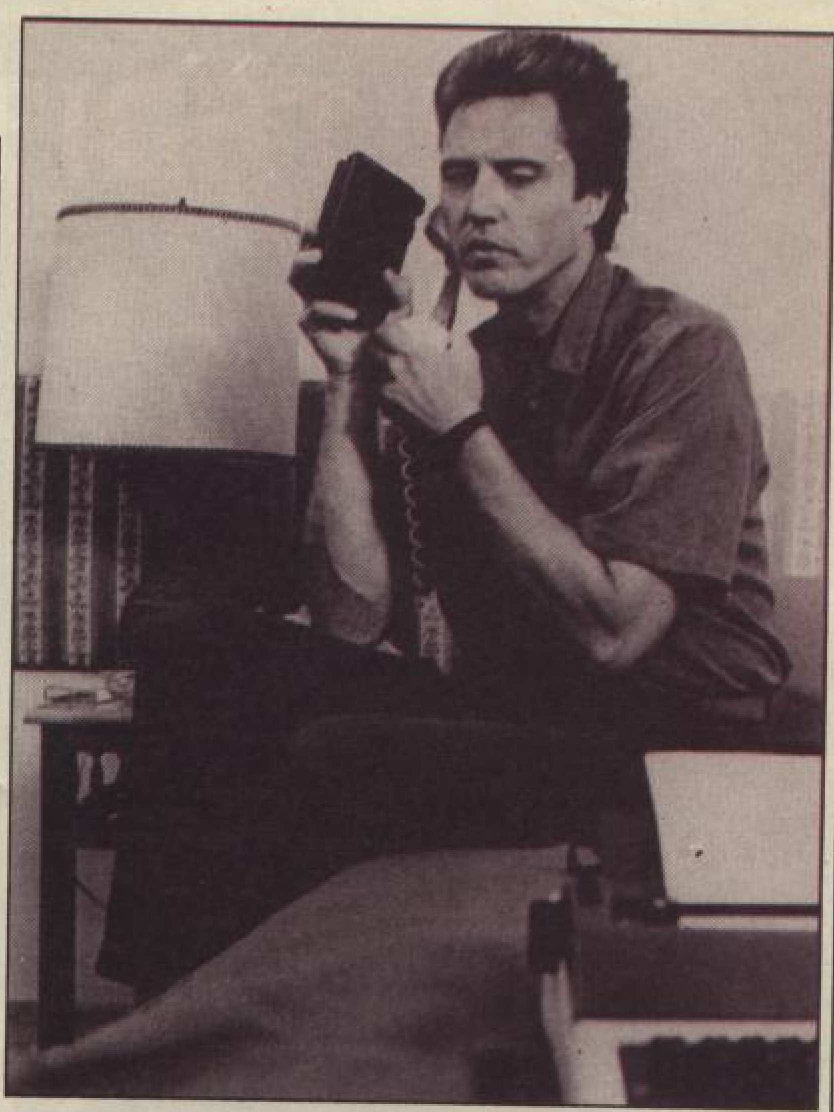
Reporting proves difficult in a world of double agents, bombings and massacres where it doesn't matter who you kill as long as you kill someone. But this reporter is more a participant than an observer; for most of the film he is a pawn in the struggle, betrayed and used by Beirut's many factions.

War Zone is the first Middle East film to go deep behind the headlines and give a real insight into the conflict in Lebanon. It exposes the absurdity of all the killing and captures and is well worth seeing. Walken, as usual, handles his role superbly.

DOMINIC HANDY 82%

War Zone *is different. It has no story as such, yet it keeps you watching. Beirut's inhabitants seem unmoved by the carnage that surrounds them daily, and this gives the film an odd atmosphere. The feelings of the Israeli people, on the other hand, come across much better than in most war movies. The vast number of warring factions is confusing, but* War Zone *presents the situation well and gives you a lot to think about.*

MIKE DUNN 80%



► **Writing the news in blood: Christopher Walken in** *War Zone*

WITCHBOARD

Guild Home Video 15

IT ALL starts at the house-warming party when bright spark Brandon Sinclair (Stephen Nicholls) decides to use the old ouija board to contact a regular chum on the 'other side' (cue *Twilight Zone* music). He and his ex-girlfriend Linda (Tawny Kitaen – *Bachelor Party*) have a good old fireside chat with the spirit of ten-year-old David.

During the conversation, Linda's husband Jim (Todd Allen) starts shouting abuse at David. Next day Jim's friend gets killed on a building site.

After the party Linda is still strangely attracted to the ouija board and gets it out for more mystical movings. Unfortunately she is befriending the spirit of someone pretending to be David – a mass murderer who died nearly a century ago. After gaining her trust he uses her to gain entrance into the world of the living.

Linda's health deteriorates, and Jim and Brandon recognise that the spirit Malfeitor has made a new home in her. In a desperate attempt to get rid of him, they call in an eccentric young psychic, Zarabeth (Kathleen Wilhoite). Things look bad all round when Zarabeth gets thrown out of her window and impaled on a spike but the two chaps fearlessly set out to destroy the ouija board and the malevolent spirit's way into the world of the living . . .

And if you believe that all that would happen in the 'real' world you've been watching too many videos! All the characters in *Witchboard* seem to have the worst of luck and the most amazing coincidences: but if you go for this supernatural stuff it'll keep you quiet for a couple of hours or so. I prefer something a bit more down-to-earth.

DOMINIC HANDY 50%

Take a large beakerful of scary juice, dilute to taste with overused tension-building music, add a pinch of the supernatural, slop it about on a ouija board for an hour or so and you've got light entertainment – Witchboard. *Worth watching? Well, I quite enjoyed it, but probably for the wrong reasons!*

BEN STONE 32%

ET AL

THE MISSION

Warner Home Video .... PG

LITTLE did the Guarani Indians of 18th-century South America realise that the death of a single priest would bring among them a man who would inexplicably change their life.

Father Gabriel (Jeremy Irons – *The French Lieutenant's Woman*) is sent from Spain to rebuild the San Carlós mission above the falls after the resident missionary's death, and to re-educate the Indians to the teachings of the Church. He is joined by Rodrigo Mendoza (Robert de Niro – *The Godfather, Part Two* films, *Taxi Driver, The Deer Hunter, The Untouchables*, etc), a former slave-trader and mercenary who after killing his brother is filled with remorse and must serve his penance in the Jesuit Mission if his soul is ever to rest.

After building strong links with the inhabitants of the forest they find the mission is threatened by changes in the boundary between Spain's and Portugal's colonial land. The missions are now on slave-trading Portuguese territory. A papal delegation led by Cardinal Altamirano (Ray McAnally) must move the missions out of Portuguese territory or threaten the existence of the Jesuit order worldwide. The Indians must be sent back into 'this Garden Of Eden' (as the Cardinal puts it; Father Gabriel admits 'it is a little overgrown') and the members of the Jesuit order must decide whether to stay with the mission – or abandon it, and all their principles. Father Gabriel leaves them to ponder over one last thought,:'If might is right, then love has no place in the world'.



▶ **The battle for a continent's soul:** *The Mission*

Roland Joffe of *The Killing Fields* fame directs. and *The Mission* was the winner of The Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival and numerous other awards. Even after a second viewing of *The Mission* I was emotionally drained. Though some of the superb photography of award-winning Chris Menges is lost in the transition to the small screen, the strong and involving atmosphere still exists thanks to the superb music of Ennio Morricone. *The Mission* is a visual and emotional experience, culminating in a breathtaking ending, so put aside plenty of viewing time – you'll need a day to recover.

DOMINIC HANDY 95%

The Mission is a brilliant film, a masterpiece in every respect. The acting is excellent, and the story moving, fluent and exciting. It probably won't be trendy or popular, but it deserves all the awards it has won and more.*

MIKE DUNN 90%



▶ **An American girl in the outback: Linda Kozlowski with Paul Hogan in** ***Crocodile Dundee***

CROCODILE DUNDEE

CBS/Fox 15

IF YOU haven't heard of Michael J 'Crocodile' Dundee, I suggest you now leave the room – the character played by Paul Hogan (TV's *Anzacs*) has already gone down in film history as one of the most amiable characters ever to come out of the Australia outback.

Walkabout Creek is a small isolated town in the Northern Térritory, and like all such towns it has its characters. One is Mick Dundee, a man who, legend has it, got half his leg bitten off by a croc while fishing in the outback, and crawled over 100 miles back to civilisation . . . 'past the hospital and straight into the nearest pub'.

The story reaches the ears of American journalist Sue Charlton (Linda Kozlowski) in Sydney; so immediately she hops in a helicopter and, for £2,500, goes looking for crocodiles with Never Never Safaris ('never go out with us, if you do you'll never come back') – her guide Mick Dundee.

Dundee, keen to impress his sultry New York companion, guides her through the Australian bush along the track which he crawled home – keeping a watchful eye on her all the way because, as Dundee puts it, 'You're a woman. You're a reporter. You're the biggest busybody in the world.' And watching herself come to grips with the Aussie outback gives Charlton a great idea of how to end her article. Why not see how Crocodile Dundee copes in New York, a human jungle?

In the streets of New York, Dundee observes: 'Imagine seven million people all wanting to live together. Yep! New York must be the friendliest place on Earth.' And besides the usual problems of coming to grips with a bidet, taxi drivers and hotel porters, Dundee also encounters hookers, junkies, tramps and transvestites.

Crocodile Dundee is an easily-lovable movie. The humour is very simple but effective, appealing to all ages. (The 15-rated video version is slightly different from the 15-rated cinema version: out goes one four-letter word.) Forget all the hype, just enjoy!

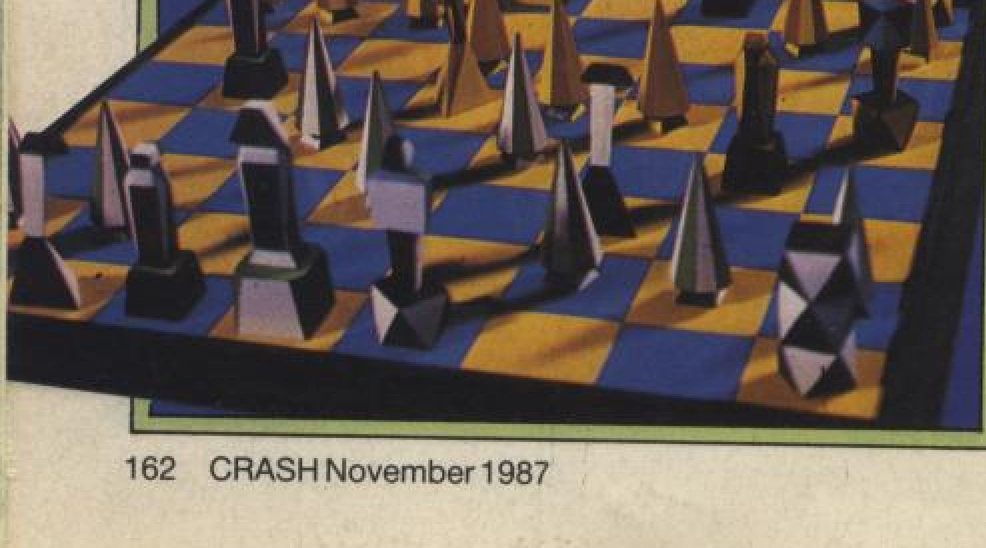
DOMINIC HANDY 90%

An ingenious mixture of slapstick and social comedy, stunning scenery and backstreet seediness, Crocodile Dundee *is perfect. The humour is sharp, yet never cruel; the film is warm, yet it never cloys, not even in the final reconciliation scene, which would be squirmingly sentimental in the hands of most film-makers.*

There is just one joke concept: the difference between the Australian outback and the New York sidewalks, seen from both sides. We leave Australia when Dundee's he-mannishness is about to get boring, and the second half is perhaps the better, with every snappy punch line and caricatured New York type sewn into a fast-moving script without visible seams.

Crocodile Dundee *is not breathtaking or terrifying or moving or even worth discussing much – it's just worth watching as a pure romantic comedy where everything works.*

BARNABY PAGE 92%



▶ **BOARD OF THE KINGS**

***Sentinel* programmer Geoff Crammond was 'bowled over' by this chess set based on characters from his game, says the maker.**

There's just one of these sets in the world, and it's the work of London photographer Peter Clements. As a hobby he'd produced the limited-edition hand-cast *Sentinel* badges (102 in existence) and went on to make the chess set based on Firebird's Issue 40 Smash.

It all started when the game got the better of him. 'On reaching Level 2974 of *The Sentinel* I gave up my quest,' Clements recalls, 'aching fingers and sore eyes having got the better of me.'

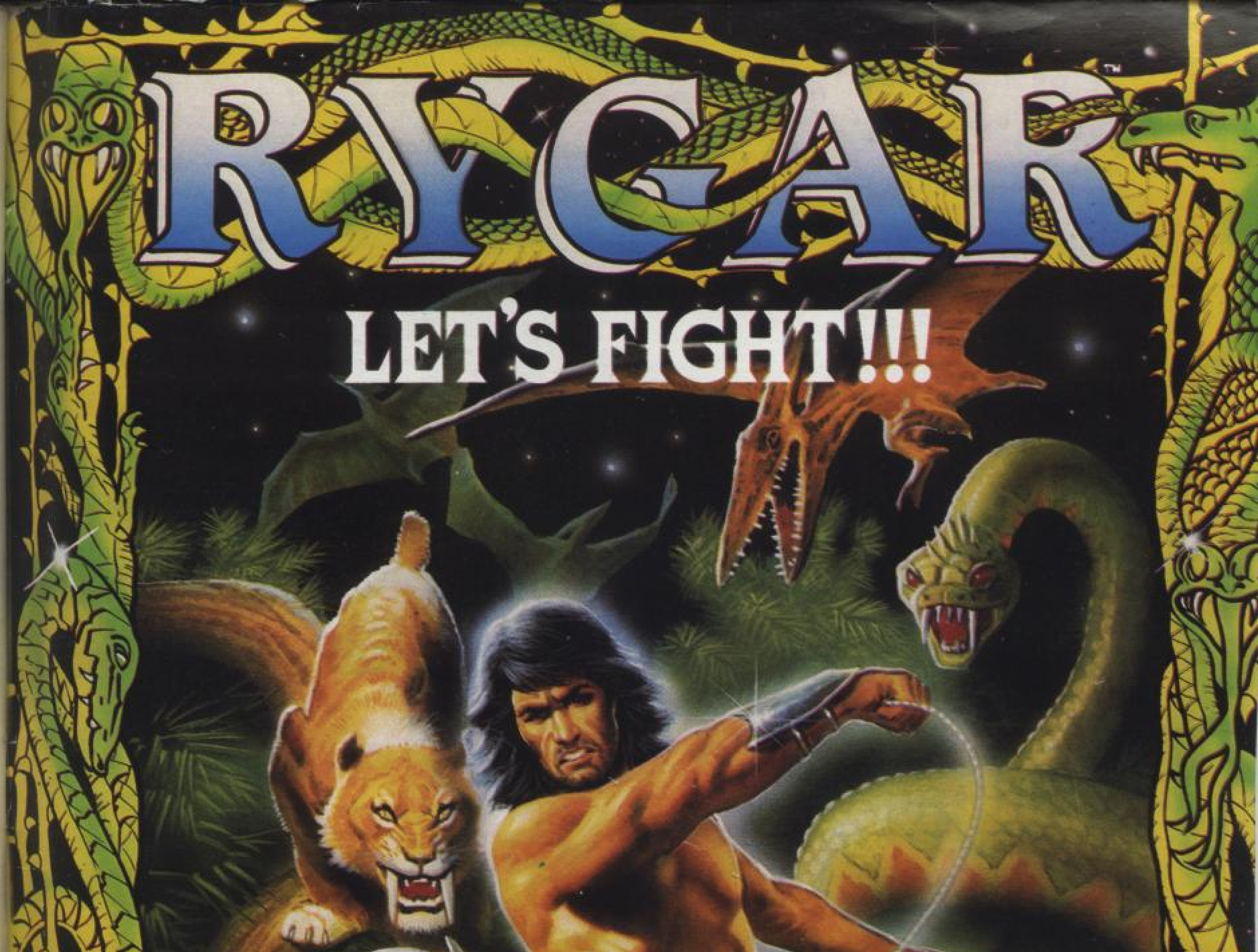
So he turned to the older, but equally time-consuming, game of chess: it took Clements 600 hours to make the set, and 'I did get bored but I didn't give up'.

Each figure in the set is based on a *Sentinel* character. The kings are based on The Sentinel himself, the queen on the Robot, the bishops on the Sentry, the knights on the Meanie, the rooks on three stacked boulders and the pawns on trees. They're painted in colours from game: the pieces on one side red, yellow and black, the opposing side is green, white and black.

'The new chess pieces seemed to fit their role perfectly,' observes Clements.

He traced them from paused screens and first carved them in epoxy putty; the finished pieces and the board are made from polyester resin.

And after six months' work, Clements is hanging on to his unique game from a game – but, he admits, 'if someone offered me the price of the new Acorn Archimedes I might just be tempted'.


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